

## LIBRARIANS

## Phillip

Institute of Technology

(Incorporating the former Preston Institute of Technology and Coburg State College)

## Chief Librarian

Located in the Northern Suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, Phillip Institute of Technology operates two Campuses with courses offered in nine schools — namely Applied Science, Art and Design, Business, Chiropractic, Community Studies, Education, Nursing, Physical Education and Leisure Studies, Social Work. In 1982 the Institute enrolled approximately 4,500 full and part-time students.

The Chief Librarian will report directly to the Assistant Director (Educational Services) and will be expected to play a major role in the development of a unified library service. Leadership qualities, administrative experience at a major library and appropriate professional qualifications are essential.

Salary: (\$Aust) \$34,285 or \$35,690 per annum and reasonable removal expenses will be paid to the successful applicant and dependants.

Applications including the names and addresses of three referees should be received by the Personnel Manager no later than Friday, 3rd September, 1982. Phillip Institute of Technology, Plenty Road, Bundoora, Victoria, 3083, Australia.

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## ARCHITECTURE

JAMES LEES-MILNE and DAVID FORD

*Images of Bath*  
389pp, including 1,200 black-and-white illustrations and 8 pages in colour.  
Saint Helena Press, 1 Saint Helena Terrace, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1NR. £95.

Bath and the print long enjoyed a special relationship. Copper engravings shadowed forth the growth of the classical city; aquatints came in at its high noon; and, to mark its decline, lithography arrived along with the railways and evangelicalism. The very land forms are pictorially composed, the contours are cooperative (for every dizzy descent a happily placed belvedere), the somewhat sluggish Avon is easy to conceal. Pale oolitic stone absorbs the light, instead of reflecting it. The Georgian resort was just small enough to fit into a general panorama, taken most often from the south - even before the terraces climbing Lansdown provided a perfect backdrop. And then the dearth of medieval churches left the Abbey as a single dominant feature; everywhere else a jumbled skyline induced mere bird's-eye views; in Bath you could always find a prospect.

Small wonder that the town and the topographic print got along so well together. Sublimity there was none: but the pure picturesque lay all around. "Infinity," said Uvedale Price, "is one of the most efficient causes of the sublime; the boundless ocean, for that reason, inspires awful sensations: to give it picturesqueness you must destroy that cause of its sublimity; for it is on the shape and disposition of its boundaries that the picturesque in great measure must depend." No need in Bath to destroy any boundaries: there never was a less infinite environment, physically or metaphysically. The main streets even today intersect one another at neurotically short intervals, and higher up the crescents loop back on themselves as though fearful of reaching somewhere else. There used to be a Lilliput Alley, which according to the historian R. E. M. Peach (himself a great print-seller) was only ten feet wide: Ralph Allen built his town-house there, but on its cramped site it was smothered by tenements. The hills crowd in on every side: Bristol is far beyond the horizon, London is another country. It often rains, but gently, as though not from a great height. The sun is close and intimate, and appears to have been provided by the same props department as everything else.

But the people? As James Lees-Milne points out in his agreeable introductory narrative to *Images of Bath*, "visitors from distant places did not flock to Bath as pilgrims but as patients." One should add that it is visitors who figure, unobtrusively, in the prints: they, after all, were the customers for this product. The indigenous population, who were bawled up blinking into unexpected light by R. S. Neale's recent social history of the town, have been excused for the present work. In any case, the status of patient was the most dignified that Bath could afford: nowhere else was body language so resolutely conjugated in verbs of limping and limping. William Beckford called it "this paradise of idlers and corpses", and made his own contribution to its funeral coarseness. Most of the ailments which were supposed to be treated in Bath had a reassuringly high tone, with few of those unpleasant scorbatic complaints in full view. The success rate for authentic cures cannot have been high, but it was something at least to feel virtuous about short breath (which the slopes cruelly exposed) and to die an accredited Bath case. Let it suffice, says Lermontov, that the disease has been identified - but God knows how to heal it!

All these aspects of the city can be traced in the gallery of 1,022 items assembled by David Ford - a further 114 prints are catalogued but not reproduced. The catalogue is meticulously thorough: in all essential matters: not all states are recorded, but for 90 per cent of users that would be an unnecessary refinement. There are good indexes, a bibliography, biographic details on local publishers and print-makers, and two functional maps to locate the places depicted. Gallery and catalogue are organized by subject, starting with the Abbey and moving through general views to features such as bridges, hotels, baths, residential areas, churches and chapels. Eight pages of colour plates are supplemented by 1,200 monochrome illustrations. Whatever may come to light in terms of additions and minor corrections, this is assuredly the most comprehensive and coherent

## The purely picturesque

Pat Rogers

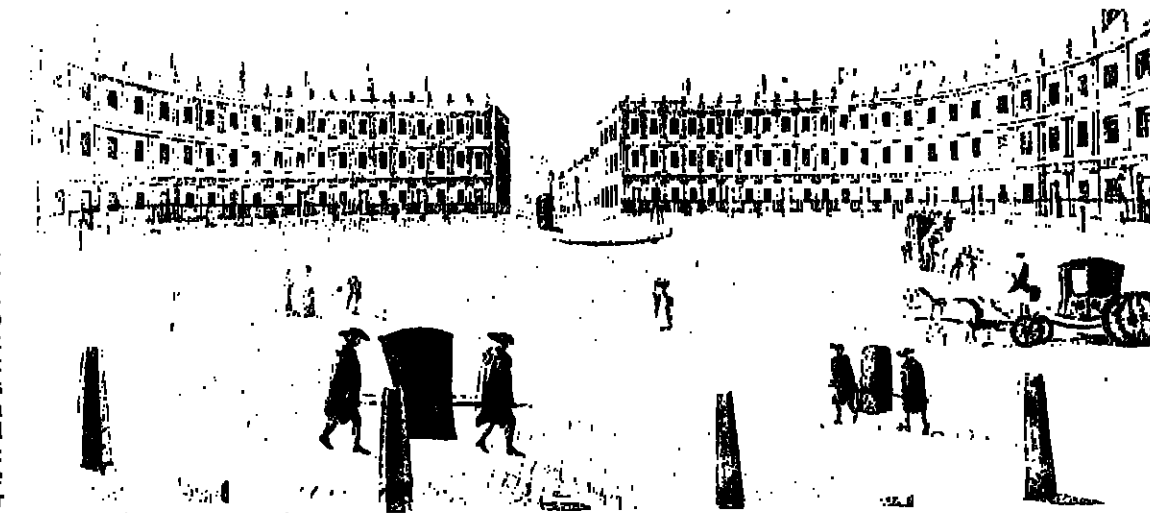
engravers, even when gifted (and that is not always the case), take second place to the subject-matter. John Robert Cozens produced a set of views, sold as etchings in the 1770s, of which the best known is probably his depiction of the Circus. It is still treeless; the cobbled expanse looks impenitently vacant (the houses are what matter), whilst coaches and chairmen wander across in oblique paths, blessedly untroubled by carriage-ways or the rule of the road. The architecture is stable and finite: locomotion is haphazard and directionless. Elsewhere Cozens seems oppressed by the need for literal fidelity, and the city fails to unlock his

compositions around buildings (regardless of the distractions of other scenery, clouds, people), and could observe the true Bath sense of perspective. This last comes out clearly in Malton's view of the Guildhall, published as an aquatint in 1779. A low angle of vision ensures that monumental stone walls dominate, while petty human beings on the street try to look as though they have something to do. The building fabric is emphatically suggested, the fabric of clothes handled without interest. In Nattes's print of the Assembly Rooms (1805), with billiards proclaimed as the main attraction, a few splashes of colour are confined to the dress of

design. By contrast, twenty-five years later, Nattes shows the Avon in the foreground, and by putting the weir into strong focus he suggests a tidal flood. Rustic appurtenances lend an almost stuffy air to the symmetries of the bridge. It is very different from all that civilized grandeur in the Royal Crescent, as seen in Malton's view from the late 1770s. A shadow slashes diagonally into the sweep of masonry, a faint scimitar shape marking its progress towards the very centre of the Crescent - thus the ellipse of the building line is transferred to the pattern of light and shade within the print itself. The usual superfluous men and women pose in the foreground: a child is whipping a top with implausible decorum. Half the surface area is sky, and yet there is no hint of the illimitable. But then a child in Bath is an intruder, and to open a vista into transcendental cloudscape would be to set the foundations of the city tottering.

James Lees-Milne has a hard task in providing a narrative to go with the sumptuous items which follow. He is not writing a straight architectural history: in many respects, this could only paraphrase Walter Isaacson's study, *The Georgian Buildings of Bath* (1948; reprinted 1969). He is not engaged in cultural history as such, although some good anecdotes are allowed to creep past the censor. Several concern Beckford, about whom Lees-Milne has written before, and whose tower high on Lansdown became the subject of several prints - none quite conveying its stately dottiness. Beckford was among the most interesting human beings to have resided in Bath, but he was never really a Bath man, with his fantasies and his yearnings for the empire. Another licence Lees-Milne permits himself is mischievously to include poor Isaac Pitman among the entertainments (the Fonetik Institute is one of the latest scenes depicted). There is happily room for a quotation from the press in 1791 which announces the death in Bath of Bamber Gascoigne, Esq., "of a total decay". *Abst. omen.*

It is not easy to find faults worth remarking in a book which has been assembled with learning and assiduous care. The first paragraph of the introductory narrative repeats a blunder found in several sources: Lees-Milne tells the story of Bladud and the swine, with an attribution to the *Historia Regum Britannie*. In fact there are two myths of origin concerning Bladud, and Geoffrey of Monmouth conspicuously omits the story about swine and leprosy (which was not to surface for centuries to come). The passage occurs in the *Historia*, II, x (or II, ix in the "variant" text edited by Hammer). Fanny Burney wasn't buried in the same grave as her husband, while there are no serious grounds for regarding Philip Basset as the original of Squire Western. Dr Richard Pococke was not "successively Bishop of Meath and Ossory", but the other way round. For the rest, my only regret is that some features of Bath architectural history are, it appears, poorly represented in prints. There is nothing to show the fine facade of the prison erected by Thomas Atwood in 1773, a Palladian box set on top of a Benthamite penitentiary - but perhaps that would have been too much to expect. There is no view of Lady Huntingdon's chapel and manse in Vineyards, whose fol-de-rols earned the approval of Horace Walpole in 1766: "The chapel is very neat, with true Gothic windows (yet I am not converted)", but I was glad to see that luxury is creeping in upon them before persecution." For that matter, the fashionable Anglican equivalent, the Octagon Chapel, makes an almost equally poor showing. But these and like omissions are the fault not of the compilers, but of the Georgian print-makers - ultimately, could be said, of the public. Prints were not so much picture-postcards or credit-cards: they were meant to flatter the visitor to Bath, and to make him feel that organized looting in picturesque surroundings is good for the soul as well as the body. You can doubt the truth of this proposition, but you cannot deny the strong hold on the English psyche for a century and more.



"The Circus", 1773; an etching, one of a set of eight views of Bath by J. R. Cozens, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

record of the visual history of Bath, in its creative period, which has ever been assembled.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to qualify that by adding "between covers", in order to take account of an associated enterprise. At Festival time, from May 21 to June 19, an exhibition was staged on the same theme as the book at the Victoria Gallery in Bath. Some 200 items from the full series were chosen for display, and although the quality of reproduction in the book is generally good, the prints made a different sort of point when hung in (appositely to Bath) close horizontal alignment - along with much else in the city, the Victoria Gallery is a little poky for its ambitions and its potential. But with both book and exhibition, one comes away impressed with the scholarship and taste of the contrivers, quite apart from the range of materials now laid before us.

It is right that the arrangement should be topical, for the artists and

highest powers: as a draughtsman of the *fell* he encounters the certainty of Bath with a timidity which cramps his line. The Cruikshanks are also present, but as one would expect here graphic satire prevails over topographic illusion. Robert Cruikshank has a pleasant scene of "The Fancy Ball" at the Assembly Rooms, with masqueraders done out as kings and queens, harlequins and clowns: a ghostly orchestra, lightly sketched, are tooting away at chandelier level from their circular niche beneath the cornice. But it could as well be the Haymarket in London.

For the most part less distinguished artists, and even totally anonymous figures, were responsible for the design of prints. There are two important exceptions, Thomas Malton junior and John Claude Nattes. Both were able to attune their techniques to the needs of the form and of their public. That is, they could work happily in a subdued colour-range, could frame their

bystanders walking in the sunlight. But again it is the deeply shadowed stone of the rooms which occupies the central space and controls the composition. One of Malton's finest works, the scene of South Parade, equally manages to convey a sense of graceful inutility in the sauntering company. There is sky, there are trees, there are even dogs - but it is the sharply receding terrace by John Wood which gives shape to the picture. (As often, the print seems to have transposed left and right as they would be in the original water-colour.)

Malton is visibly a generation earlier than Nattes in his outlook and preferred subjects. When Malton depicted Adam's gorgeous Pulteney Bridge, then new, he introduced only a little of the countryside beyond Bathwick which surrounded the bridge. The hills peep out apologetically, content to be upstaged by the saucer-domed pavilions which Adam stationed at the flanks of his

## A Paradigm

Here, mother, are a few words of love, meant for Christmas and unfinished. But mother, I mean to give you love, a window in you in which I see myself younger than I thought. Is this love's face, I, who love, seeing none

but mine? Rather, a crooked tree, its wood sawn from another's limb, propped by an engine's metal shaft, of the intricate machinery of steam.

What use have I for the figure, its indices, the closed dot on its open page? A Kennedy's Latin Primer held shut in his hand, the rosy cheeks recited a paradigm

the tongue charished with ruthless Latin.

Jon Silkin

Handwritten note in a box: "The Circus" 1773



# The earned and the unearned

Stefan Collini

JOHN ALLETT

New Liberalism: The Political Economy of J. A. Hobson  
275pp. University of Toronto Press.  
£17.50.  
0 8020 5558 3

Not all that far back in the queue of those auditioning for the still-uncast role of "the English Weber" stands J. A. Hobson, described in 1900 as "tall, spare and of delicate health - one of those ardent spirits enthusiastic for work even beyond his strength, as if the sword was wearing out the scabbard". At some point he will have to be told that he is not, frankly, quite the right man for the part. He has his claims, of course, especially as the author of an impressive list of books attempting to work outwards from a critique of the presuppositions of neo-classical economics to a more sociological assessment of the place of economic activity in human life. But the role is an extraordinarily demanding one; and Hobson's backers would have to concede that even he just doesn't have the required range.

How about "the English Vehlen"? Now there is a congenial part. Lots of room to display sarcasm at the expense of the possessing classes, and a very nice study in resentment at one's exclusion from the respectable circles of academic economists. But there is scope for a quirky kind of originality, and a chance to deliver some really tremendous moralistic harangues. Yes, just the man for the part. Hobson may well have thought so too. He certainly shared the general English ignorance of Weber's work (apart from *The Protestant Ethic*), but in his seventy-eighth year he contributed an admiring appreciation of Vehlen to the short-lived series on Modern Sociologists.

This equally admiring study of Hobson is one indication among many that he is now, after a period of relative neglect, receiving his share - perhaps rather more than his share - of scholarly attention. He has always, of course, got a mention for having narrowly failed to be Lenin as a theorist of the economic causes of imperialism, and for having rather more comprehensively failed to be Keynes as an analyst of the economic crises of capitalism. Two awards of *posthumous success* which rested, as has since been pointed out by Eric Stokes and others, on the blurring of his rather important distinctions. His current prominence, however, derives from the promotion of an entirely new team, the New Liberals, whose two chief goal-scors (or at least goal-prescribers) were Hobson and Hobbhouse. In this literature some rather large claims have been made for Hobson as a Liberal philosopher, though it is arguable whether either the adjective or the noun really suit him.

The title of John Allett's book indicates that this is where he wishes to situate Hobson, though the curious absence of the definite article may suggest an oblique relationship to this literature (as well as the fact that he has been pre-empted in the use of the full title), a suggestion which the book itself confirms. The sub-title is, as so often, more informative, and the bulk of the book consists of careful summaries of Hobson's chief economic and quasi-economic ideas. Dr Allett also wishes to endorse, and indeed extend, the claims recently made on Hobson's behalf. From a thematic analysis of his enormous oeuvre there emerges, Allett asserts, "a surprisingly coherent philosophy - surprising in the light of Hobson's reputation for inconsistency". If by "inconsistency" is meant the persistent inability to combine theoretically incompatible elements, rather than shifts from one position to another, then there is surely something to this reputation, but it is to be true that a small cluster of related assumptions informs Hobson's work from at least the 1890s to his death in 1919.

the more narrowly-conceived histories of economic thought, Hobson has been largely identified with the "utopianism" heresy, that is, the idea that depressions, unemployment, and the other chronic

ills of a market economy were fundamentally due to a lack of purchasing power, or will, among the consumers, a lack attributed to "over-saving", which in turn Hobson came to see as a consequence of the maldistribution of wealth. In fact, as less blinkered readings have made clear, this was a relatively superficial and far from constant element even in Hobson's economic thought, the core of which was provided by what Allett calls "the theory of organic surplus value". This, under a slightly different name, was made the focus of analysis in what remains the best discussion of Hobson's social and economic thought, the late Alan Lee's 1970 PhD thesis, a source which several subsequent scholars, including Allett, have consulted with profit.

The working idea behind Hobson's concept of the "surplus" was essentially that it was a mistake to see the creation of value purely in terms of the contributions of separate individuals or other factors of production. Instead, he insisted (here much influenced by the fashionable late-nineteenth century organic metaphor), economists ought to recognize the existence of an element of value created by "society", and therefore that any theory of distribution should isolate this element rather than simply allowing it to accrue to whoever proved, usually for non-economic reasons, to have the strongest power in the market. This theory, as Allett rightly says, in turn underlay Hobson's programme of social and fiscal reform, for it promised, as he construed it, to discriminate wealth that was "earned" from wealth that was, speaking purely functionally, "unearned", and hence to provide a basis for a form of redistribution which could appear to build upon rather than undermine the ethical imperatives of the age, and thus to avoid some of the pitfalls of an egalitarian Socialism. The favourable reception given to Hobson's exposition of this theory by both Liberals and Socialists immediately before and after the First World War is a historical story of some interest, now best recounted in Peter Clarke's *Liberals and Social Democrats*.

Allett provides careful and fully-documented summaries of Hobson's various uses of this idea, but it is clear that his own prime interest is not in its historical impact. He announces at the outset that the aim of his study is "to show that Hobson is not deserving of the neglect he has received in the past", and to do this in part by reversing "some standard, dismissive criticisms of Hobson's thought". This revisionism carries conviction in the case of Hobson's views about imperialism, which are more complex than has sometimes been assumed; it looks rather more optimistic where his central economic theory is at issue. Marshall remarked at the time, with characteristic caution, that as a critic of orthodox economics Hobson was "perhaps apt to underestimate the difficulty of the problems which he discusses". It is a judgment which might be made of some other nineteenth-century critics of political economy: it certainly represents a truth about Hobson to which Allett might have given fuller consideration.

Hobson, like Ruskin, from whose writings he drew much inspiration, confronted the theories of classical political economy (and in his case "marginalist" neo-classicism) with a permanent sense of moral outrage. Their formulations, he complained, were presented as attempts to measure the satisfactions of human wants, but in fact the whole science proceeded from unreal human premises to inhuman political conclusions. "There is no wealth but life", declared Ruskin grandly, in a phrase which Hobson repeatedly endorsed, and so the abstractions of political economy needed to be replaced by a study of human welfare in all its complexity. This reaction was, I suspect, more an expression of frustration with the immense cultural standing of political economy in nineteenth-century Britain than an appreciation of its internal theoretical inadequacies. In reading Hobson's tirades against economics one has the constant sense that he is

missing the point. He is like a man who, observing the central place of a pair of scales in a greengrocer's, complains that they are inadequate because they express potatoes and carrots in the same terms, and that they are sinister because they obscure differences of quality in what they weigh, both defects serving to enable the shopkeeper systematically to defraud his customers. It is striking that Hobson never really proposed an alternative system for measuring the operation of economic forces; what he offered instead was an elaborate taxonomy of types of human satisfaction, moral and spiritual as well as material.

Even in its own terms, Hobson's "humanistic economics" discloses pervasive ambiguities. Take the crucial claim to be able to discriminate the unearned "social" element in wealth. His favoured way of putting this was to ask us to imagine that the precise level of remuneration could be determined for each individual's labour (or other factor of production) which was sufficient to stimulate him to put forth his fullest productive efforts; then, any returns gained above that level were part of the surplus, and hence could be appropriated by the community through taxation without stinting any productive capacities. But even leaving aside the many other difficulties which this is in fact no economic means by which this level could be determined. Although at first sight it may seem to represent a heavily modified marginalist analysis of what is economically necessary to bring any given factor of production into play, it must in fact reflect either what the market, with all its imperfections, will bear, or else a moral decision by society about what each return "ought" to be. Since Hobson developed the whole idea as a way of escaping from the arbitrariness of market forces, the first alternative was obviously unacceptable, but this left him not, despite his claims, with a rival economic theory, but with the

intractable problems of translating a vision of social justice into a system of rewards and incentives.

Hobson pointed out that his concept of "unearned" wealth did not correspond exactly to the colloquial sense: some return upon investment was economically necessary (and hence, in his sense, "earned") to stimulate that productive function. But since on the basis of his own theory there was no non-arbitrary way in which the level of this return could be determined beyond the limiting case in which a known potential productive function was not being stimulated at all, there could be no guarantee that a particular rate of taxation would only hit the unproductive "surplus". Allett seems at one point to recognize this central weakness of Hobson's theory, without acknowledging its full significance: "If the margin no longer provided security of measurement, on which objective basis could a clear distinction between costs and surplus be made? Hobson, although aware of the problem, was unable to provide an answer." But this is surely fatal to the cherished "scientific" character of the economic basis of his political, and more especially his fiscal, theory; and Allett has to concede that Hobson was "unable to provide the yardsticks necessary if his system of taxation were to operate in the discriminating fashion he proposed". When confronted with some of these difficulties, Hobson himself simply asserted, with a revealing mixture of conviction and confusion, that

the difficulty of measuring these surpluses in all cases, or of distinguishing them from legitimate rewards or incentives of initiative, enterprise and personal efficiency, does not impair either the theoretical validity of the distinction, or its practical importance in all thoughtful proposals for making the economic system more equitable and more productive of human values.

Upon which Allett comments, with

culpable blandness: "even though compromise, this was still a powerful legacy to leave progressive reformers. 'Powerful' is going it a bit."

The truth is that Hobson was an engaging example of that kind of species, the cracker-barrel economist. His analytical emphasis on the "social" sources of wealth was based upon his emotional and moral commitment to the overriding status of community goods and the intrinsically desirable character of cooperative activities. It is not clear whether to regard as an explanatory fact that someone was the passionate theorist of an essentially communal nature of reality worthwhile human action should have passed almost his entire adult life in the irredeemably solitary activity of free-lance writing, just as one can be indulgent or severe about the fact that this unrelenting critic wrote his lengthy denunciations of capitalism because of a small inheritance from a newspaper-owning father (a story which Hobson's own sense of the dramatic as displayed in his highly limited autobiography, was certainly not altogether equal).

To maintain his extraordinary list of books and articles, Hobson had to make more withdrawals than deposits at his account with the Zeitgeist, a relationship which is never without interest for the intellectual historian. By contrast, Allett's claim about Hobson's "contemporary relevance" does seem something of a pious hope, though the source of his own interest in the subject becomes clear in those "who believe that social reform is actually completed by freeing who is best in his ideas from crippling class integument. Hobson's problematic remains pertinent, and works continue to have something to contribute to this on-going debate. The queue for the part of "the English Gramsci" is a bit further over the left.

## The domestic trap

Alan Ryan

The Daughters of Karl Marx: Family Correspondence 1866-1898  
Commentary and Notes by Olga Meier. Translated and adapted by Faith Evans.  
342pp. Deutsch. £4.95.  
0 233 97337 0

The Daughters of Karl Marx consists of something over a hundred letters from Marx's three daughters - and a few from their husbands - to one another or to Marx himself. They start with Eleanor writing to her father in 1866 urging him to finish writing his caruncles in Margate and come home to his children's party, and they end a few weeks before Eleanor killed herself in the spring of 1898, with a harassed letter from Eleanor to Laura, in which she all too characteristically expresses anxiety about Edward Aveling's health, enthusiasm for the engineering workers' strike, and exasperation at the effects of Edward Bernstein's "wet" socialism. This is very decidedly a "family correspondence": these letters are a selection from the holdings of the Bettelheim Archive, and are drawn from a collection of over 350 letters which Marx's great-grandson Marcel-Charles Languet gave to Emile Bettelheim.

The present edition largely follows a French edition which came out some three years ago, save that almost all of the letters are here left in their original English - an English which is occasionally original in quite another sense. They are supplemented by Meier's and Faith Evans's and by a long and thoughtful introduction from Dr not add much to what most readers will already know about Marx and

Marxism - readers of Yvonne Kapp's *Eleanor Marx* will be prepared for the endless wrangling over Marx's papers which darkened Engels's last years, and they will already know as much as anyone could wish to know about the intrigues within the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League, and about the utter unreliability and faithlessness of Edward Aveling. These letters shed no new light on the nature of "the utter ruin - everything to the last penny, or utter, open disgrace" which Eleanor told her illegitimate half-brother Freddy Demuth she faced in the autumn of 1897, and which evidently led to her suicide a few months after, though they do provide some more colour to the picture of her life which Mrs Kapp has painted.

Nor do they add much to Mrs Kapp's splendid portrait of the family life of the Marxes, as they moved from the seamy surroundings of Soho through the bleakness of brand-new Kentish Town to the safety of Haverstock Hill. The "Creole temperament" of Paul Lafargue to which Dr Marx, Victorian daughter, took such exception, doesn't have much chance to emerge here; indeed, the threatening Latin Marx tried to keep away from Laura, but without any luck, turns up in these pages as a keen gardener and keeper of chickens - when Eleanor and Aveling found themselves a house in Sydenham, Eleanor confessed that she was hoping for a visit from the Lafargues so that Paul could instruct her in horticultural matters. Marx's attempts to hang on to his daughters, at least to prevent them making marriages as imprudent as his own, don't really get an airing here - they are mentioned in the notes, but one has to turn to Mrs Kapp really to find out what was going on; and the runableness, pining, song-singing and hell-raising side of the founder of scientific socialism remains equally hidden.

What these letters do do is show a alarming picture of how horrible the lives of mothers and wives could be if they had middle-class aspirations, a decent education, lively minds and not enough money. Marx's eldest daughter Jenny, who died two months before her father in the winter of 1883, bore six children in the eight years of her marriage, found herself either trapped by domesticity or exhausted by stitching together a family life with her husband in exile in England. In one of her last letters to Laura, she writes, "I do believe that even the old routine of factory work is not more killing than are the endless domestic duties. To me, at least, this is a *menage*. To me, at least, this is always has been so". Jenny, after all, was politically highly educated, being stuck in the suburbs of Agincourt, where nothing happened more exciting than the passage of the Chesham Road, was pretty well a sentence of life imprisonment.

Laura's experiences must strike the modern reader as peculiarly horrible in the space of three years she had three children and saw them all die. Even Sheila Rowbotham, who has longed "to be able to parcel up a few baby-care books, antiques and baby clinics back into the past, to give them avert all these 'little' tragedies". More coolly, she notes that one of the ways in which the socialist imagination failed in the late nineteenth century was its "inability to deal with domestic domesticity as social life with social remedies. Even when, as in the case of the Marxes, the women embraced feminist aspirations, they were always by thinking of women collectively performing women's work, not by challenging the idea that women's work at all. The daughters of Marx saw their own tragedies as essentially domestic misfortunes rather than public tragedies, a small symptom of a larger loss to the socialist tradition.

## Romancing along the road

Mark Abley

DOUGLAS A. HARPER  
Good Company  
172pp. University of Chicago Press.  
\$14.  
0 235 31686 6

JAN HAROLD BRUNVAND  
The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends and Their Meanings  
208pp. W. W. Norton. £10.50.  
0 235 01473 8

Douglas Harper's affectionate portrait of American tramps purports to be a sociological record; it is described in an unnecessary and slightly pompous afterword as "a worthy successor to the classic works of 'Chicago' sociology'".

True, *Good Company* adds some useful information to the knowledge already accumulated about the hobos of the US, particularly with regard to their difficulties in adapting to new technology in railways and agriculture. But the real fascination of the book lies in its account of a gradual rite of passage, an unspoken initiation, a mode of learning. The bulk of the text consists of Harper's retelling of a train journey from Minneapolis to the state of Washington in the company of a middle-aged vagrant named Carl, and the experience of apple-picking there while the two men shared a cabin. It was not exactly a friendship, for Carl resisted the emotional intimacy that the physical conditions made possible, and after a few weeks their companionship dwindled away into silence and incomprehension. Harper claims that as a general rule tramps fight shy of friendship and place a high value on privacy. Nonetheless their relationship was temporarily valuable to them both, and (as described years later by Harper, now an assistant professor in the New York City) it assumed a master/pupil quality with an almost mythic resonance. The young man ceased to see Carl through the eyes of the world; at moments he came close to seeing the world from the standpoint of a professional tramp.

By the time he ventured West, Harper already had considerable experience of life on Boston's skid-row, and he was alert to the nuances, the class distinctions, that separate men whom most of society would classify simply as "down and out". Ever since the American Civil War and the advent of railways in the West, some farmers have depended on migrant labour to pick their crops; the celebrated hobos of the 1930s were neither the first nor the last groups of travelling men to ride the rails in search of work. These travellers (hobos)

boxcar tramps, or bindle stiffs: Harper's glossary of travelling parlance is invaluable) live a very different life from that of the bums, winos or mission stiffs who are permanently derelict in the cities of America. In some respects their vagabond existence is more akin to the way of life of gypsies in the Old World than to that of the women and men who find themselves down and out in Paris and London. Even the long and apparently uncontrolled bouts of drinking can, in Harper's view, be considered as vacations from a pattern of life which, for much of the year, is remarkable for its quiet discipline. He was once riding the rails along with nearly forty tramps when some "riffraff" climbed aboard and began to pass around two gallons of cheap wine; all the tramps were thirsty but most of them refused to take a sip.

Such a life still bears a strong resemblance to the hobo world so memorably evoked by the naturalist poet and former drifter Loren Eiseley in his autobiography *All The Strange Hours*. At one point Eiseley, whose recollections of the Depression had a gently wistful ring, quoted a line of Carl Sandburg: "All the coaches will be scrap and rust and the people ashes." The prophecy has taken its time to come true, but it does now seem that the classic days of American tramping are finished. High-speed railways with efficient machines to pick large quantities of fruit; the hostility of railway employees; infiltration by outsiders ignorant of the old ways - all these constitute a formidable threat to the maintenance of tramp culture. *Good Company* is thus an elegy, and in a personal as well as sociological sense. For now that he has a job, a family and a house, Harper finds that his own perspective has altered. The man who wrote the book is not the youth who learned the rituals of wayfaring life. Yet it is Harper the teacher and author who admits that "Tramp lessons represent in a particular way the truest voice I've heard telling me I must face personally and alone the implications of my decision." *Good Company* is, in part, a lament for simplicity. It remains to be said that ten or twelve of his accompanying photographs are as evocative as almost anything in the text.

A point which he touches on only briefly concerns the extent to which the cherished self-image of millions of Americans is tied up with a perpetual mobility and freedom of action which tramps uniquely possess. Tramping has a long social history, but tramps behave without concern for past or future. It is almost as if their very rootlessness and poverty allows them to live out a fragment of the national

dream. However, the dream is changing shape. One reason why tramps have begun to seem an anachronism in contemporary America is that their journeys are still conducted mostly by train (although some car-owning vagrants, or rubber tramps, can be found, they do not fit easily into the general pattern of tramp culture). Until the 1950s, American popular music often dealt with hobo life; references to it are frequent in the songs of Woody Guthrie, Doc Watson, Pete Seeger and others. But with the arrival of the car as the normal means of transport for even poor people in the US, folk culture and folk music moved to the road. Paul Simon's "America" and "Papa Hobo" tell of wandering aimlessly across the country - but of wandering by bus and car. *Easy Rider* would have been a fine title for a movie about tramps; in fact the film showed America from the seat of a motorbike.

This change in the journeying ethos is reflected in the nation's tall tales and urban legends as well as in its songs and films. The very titles of the stories outlined in Jan Harold Brunvand's *The Vanishing Hitchhiker* reveal how deeply American popular culture now depends on automobiles: "The Death Car", "The Economical Car", "The Killer in the Backseat", "The Solid Cement Cadillac", "The Philanderer's Porsche", and so on. Older versions of these stories were set on horseback, which gives the book its title has an unusually long and complicated history; one variant was printed in St Petersburg in 1890. Brunvand denies, though without arguing the point, the relevance of an archetypal tale of a disappearing passenger in Chapter Eight of the Acts of the Apostles. Early specimens of the story in the US (and a 1920s account from the Canadian Maritimes, not recorded in this book) speak of a ghost-rider on horseback, or ghost at the traveller's destination. As the tale developed, the horse was transmuted into a car and the ghostly rider into a mysterious hitchhiker. It remains a widely known and widely believed story all over America, in different regions of which it has accumulated such unlikely participants as a Hawaiian volcano goddess, a weeping Mexican spirit, and the three nephews from the *Book of Mormon*.

For the most part Brunvand is content to relate the plots of folktales, many of them macabre or grotesque, without lingering over their implications and significance: "such speculation is beyond the scope of this book." Nevertheless, these outpourings of the collective American psyche do suggest certain conclusions. It is reassuring to learn that the mass media actually encourage the spread of urban legends, rather than stamping

them into the oblivion of reason - one of the more pleasant consequences, perhaps, of the populist nature of America's press and its broadcasting networks. A story denied in print might be repeated, in somewhat altered form, on radio, eventually to find its way via a TV talk-show back into print halfway across the nation, leaving all the while a curdled on a flourishing word-of-mouth life. In 1975 the enormously popular Ann Landers, a dispenser of cheery bromides in newspapers all over the US, published what was to become her most notorious column; it centred on a woman's letter confessing how a water-reader had discovered her naked in the basement, sporting only her son's football helmet. Probably this was already an urban legend, and its appearance in the national press gave it a new currency without fixing it in an unalterable form. The essentials of the tale remain constant, but the details (the identity of the intruder, or the reason for the woman's headgear) vary from teller to teller.

Not surprisingly, the richness of folk-tale in the US has affected the nation's literature. Brunvand cites versions of urban legends that crop up in the work of novelists as different as Carson McCullers, Thomas Pynchon and John Steinbeck. Literary use of traditional lore may well have given these stories new life, although it is equally probable that some of the tales originated in literature; a folk-tale circulating in Budapest in 1960 can be traced back to the Russian novel *Twelve Chairs*, published in 1928. Mel Brooks's film treatment of the story may have given it oral life in America. Indeed, the international diversity of a few narratives is little short of remarkable. "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" turns up in Korea as well as Russia, North America and Western Europe, and "The Baby in the Oven" was horrifying West Africans at exactly the same time as it was making the

rounds of American parties and dormitories. Most of Britain's urban legends are probably familiar across the Atlantic, though in different form: our musty tale of the cooked Alsatian in a local Chinese (or Indian) takeaway has its counterpart in the rat known throughout America to have formed part of a dish of Kentucky Fried Chicken. And the story of the grandmother's corpse, mislaid by British holiday-makers in Spain, is nearly identical to the American tale of a dead grandmother who goes missing from her careless family on a trip to Mexico. Brunvand characterizes all these folk-stories as "symbols of our culture and reflections of our lives". His book could well serve as an excellent basis for what is truly required: a sustained, imaginative, wide-ranging analysis and interpretation of this mass of extraordinary material.

*Irving Babbitt: Representative Writings* (315pp. University of Nebraska Press. £11.70. 0 8032 3655 7) is edited with an introduction by George A. Panichas. The selection is divided into three parts: "Outlook and Overview", "The Life of Literature", "Ideas and the World". The first part contains essays on "What I Believe" (in which "Babbitt summarizes the principles of the New Humanism... In Baconian and Rousseauistic ideas he sees the radical sources, the errors, of a modern humanism exalting the materialistic, especially in the assumption that man is good... Babbitt insists upon moderation, common sense and common decency, which he associates with a positive, critical humanism and hence, with the spirit of the gentleman and the spirit of religion") and "The Rational Study of the Classics". The essays in Part II include "English and the Discipline of Ideas", "Form and Expression", and "Joubert"; and in Part III "Democracy and Standards" and "Madame de Staël".

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## Art across the land

Frances Spalding

ROBERT HOBBS  
Robert Smithson: Sculpture  
261pp. with colour plates and 225 black and white illustrations.  
Cornell University Press. £19.50.  
0 8014 1324 9

An interesting paradox has emerged with the use of land in contemporary art: the further artists disappeared into the wilderness, the more readily they were acclaimed by the metropolitan art world. Today the one sculptor in Britain who enjoys a reputation comparable with that of Henry Moore in the 1930s, is Richard Long. In America Robert Smithson has been accorded heroic status, and not only because of his tragic death at the age of thirty-five when his plane crashed while he was inspecting the site for his proposed "Amarillo Ramp". Up to that point his career had answered the needs of the New York art world as easily as the black viscous material in his "Asphalt Rundown, Rome" had rolled down the side of an abandoned quarry: the sludge itself seeped into the cracks and gullies like a three-dimensional satire on Abstract Expressionism.

If Minimalism had reduced art to a

tautology, by taking as its subject the formal presence of the work of art, Smithson took its logic a step further. He observed that Minimalism's deliberate dumbness was a kind of non-seeing or visual blindness and blandly asked: "If art is about vision, can it also be about non-vision?" He then proceeded to deflect attention away from the gallery by exhibiting "Nonsites" - metal boxes filled with rocks, which, together with maps and photographs, directed the viewer to the geographical site where the rocks had been found. He delighted in "unresolvable dialectics", as Robert Hobbs observes, the work of art hovering between the site and Nonsite. In Smithsonian style, the artist learned the rituals of wayfaring life. Nonsite one may lapse into places of little organisation and no direction.

Smithson himself, of course, did just the opposite. This book uncovers the direction of his career took, with landscape itself eventually becoming the focus of his art. Even if his "Spiral Jetty" leads nowhere and the visitor has no alternative but to retrace his steps along the pathway that cuts into the red saline water of the Great Salt Lake, the piece is not just a gratuitous heroic gesture. Several, contiguous factors combine to make it, as Hobbs

argues, "a primitive monument of the passing machine age", another instance of the artist's abiding interest in entropy and destruction. (Ironically the "Jetty" has been under water since 1972.)

Hobbs's detailed catalogue and the essays by Lucy Lippard and Lawrence Alloway place this book in the highest rank of American art criticism: Smithson could not have been better served. But his total accord with his art leaves one wary. When Hobbs brushes over the fact that it can also be purposefully obfuscate and distort, he nonsensical or banal. The eleven-page bibliography details the critical attention Smithson received in his life. It suggests that if his art challenged the concept of the precious art object and the gallery system, it did so in a way that quickly became acceptable. Yet of all the land artists Smithson stands out as the one most seriously concerned with the issues of today. At the time of his death he was approaching mining firms and quarry owners in the hope of making art out of industrial waste. But it is difficult to assess his achievement while his work is obscured by a fog of indiscriminating praise. Smithson himself was more astute, admitting that "the earth avoided muddy thinking when it comes to earth projects".

JAN 10 1983











# On utilitarian grounds

Brian Barry

J. E. HARE and CAREY B. JOYNT  
Ethics and International Affairs  
208pp. Macmillan. £17.50.  
0 333 27853 4

"In the judgement of the present writers, the consequences are probably better of having the rules more or less as they are". That sentence, with its invertebrate syntax, its ramified qualifications, and its complacent conclusion, typifies *Ethics and International Affairs*. The context happened to be "the rules defining *ius in bello*" but it could equally have been almost any other topic touched on in this short but turgid book. What is especially remarkable is that the authors profess to be followers of R. M. Hare, a utilitarian. How could someone committed to maximizing the satisfaction of human desires be complacent when millions in poor countries suffer preventable starvation and disease and when weapons of mass destruction threaten at any moment to destroy the major population centres of the northern hemisphere and perhaps to end human life on the planet? Mainly by simply not considering radical departures from the status quo. Myopia and lack of imagination are, as Orwell observed, the safest routes to conservatism in a situation where conservatism is intellectually untenable.

A serious and systematic treatment of international issues from a utilitarian standpoint would be a very valuable addition to the philosophical literature in international relations. In the past few years there have been excellent books drawing their intellectual sustenance from John Rawls's theory of justice (Charles Beitz's *Political Philosophy and International Relations*), from the concept of universal human rights (Henry Shue's *Basic Rights*) and from the tradition of Christian and Jewish casuistry (Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*). A strong book deriving its conclusions from utilitarian premises would nicely complement those I have listed, but this restatement of the American conventional wisdom is not it. The product of collaboration between a senior international relations specialist (Carey B. Joynt) and a junior philosopher (J. E. Hare), its substantive chapters are less a systematic deployment of utilitarian ethics than a rather woolly international relations text with sundry "moral" ruminations.

It begins with a told-to-the-children exposition of R. M. Hare's moral theory. A good deal of space is devoted to universalizability - that if it is right for me to do something then it would be right for you to do the same thing in identical circumstances - but then the absolutely crucial move that is required to get from there to utilitarianism goes by almost as if it were not a new point at all. This is the idea that morality is universalized *prudence*, and it in no way follows from the idea that morality

must be capable of universalization. Hare, in *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method and Point*, gives us an argument for this move, albeit a flimsy one, but in this book it is simply asserted as an aside on page 3.

Following a weak discussion of the by now well-worn question of "realism" in international relations, we get to the chapter on "Ethics and War" whose muffled conclusion about *ius in bello* I have already quoted. The bitty and superficial discussion here represents a major missed opportunity, since much of the "just war" tradition turns on the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, and this for a utilitarian is not in itself a morally significant distinction. The objection to green bombing and *a fortiori* nuclear weapons is that they kill people, not that they kill civilians. That the slaughter in the trenches in the First World War was relatively all right because it almost entirely involved soldiers is an implication of the distinction that a utilitarian should be able to make hay with.

The next chapter ("Three Hard Choices") illustrates, if one compares it with Walzer's brilliant use of concrete examples in *Just and Unjust Wars*, that it is not enough simply to tell a story interlarded with moral judgments. First, you have to know what point in your moral theory the example is to illuminate; second, the theory should dictate what facts are to count as relevant; and, third, the discussion should be structured so as to show in detail how the theory works and how it would have worked differently if the facts had been different. None of these desiderata is met by the discussion here of (1) the return of Russian prisoners-of-war to the Soviet Union in 1945, (2) Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and (3) - an odd two-page tailpiece - Chamberlain and appeasement.

Not only do the discussions fail to deploy utilitarian reasoning in a systematic way, they consistently fudge one of the central issues in utilitarian morality. Because the criterion of the rightness or wrongness of an act is the goodness or badness of its consequences, an act may seem right at the time on the basis of the information available to the agent, and thus be praiseworthy to perform, but turn out in the event to have been the wrong thing to do. Since, in the three cases taken up by the authors, we now have much more information than was available to those whose decisions are analysed, it is essential to distinguish carefully between the best estimates available to the actors and the best estimates we can make now. This the authors fail to do.

The next chapter is about nuclear deterrence and is concerned mainly with this question: if deterrence fails and one side is hit by a first strike, it is obviously contrary to utilitarianism (and just about any other) morality to launch a second strike, since all that will do is gratuitously kill a lot of other people on the other side. (The

standard utilitarian argument that deterrent threats should be carried out even when they have failed to deter in order to make the threat more plausible in future seems grotesquely out of place when, first, we are talking about killing millions of people and, second, conditions afterwards would be so unimagingly different that no straightforward "lesson" would be available to the survivors.) The obvious problem that this presents is, however, that deterrence then collapses if the other side believes your side will act in accordance with the requirements of morality.

In practice this is clearly a non-problem, since nobody could be certain what the response to a first strike would actually be. The authors fumble their way to this conclusion but with unnecessary difficulty. They vastly underestimate the likelihood that control and communications would fail in the aftermath of a nuclear attack. A single American submarine commander has enough independently targetable missiles to destroy all the major Soviet population centres. How sure can anyone be that not one would order a launch after determining that most of the US had been destroyed?

The chapter on "Arms Control and Disarmament" is the most inadequate. Given the immense destructiveness of nuclear weapons, a utilitarian - or, I would think, any decent human being - should concentrate above all on how to

minimize the probability of their being used. Of course, other effects of alternative policies (eg. changes in political control) would also be relevant, but each should be compared seriously in value with the results of nuclear war and assigned, as far as one can, a probability of occurrence. The whole range of alternatives, from attempts to achieve a "safe" first strike capability, through numerical superiority, parity, minimal nuclear deterrence (scrap everything except a few submarines), nuclear disarmament, and both nuclear and conventional disarmament, should be dispassionately canvassed.

An excellent start has been made recently by Douglas Lackey ("Missiles and Morals: A Utilitarian Look at Nuclear Deterrence", *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Summer 1982). Lackey compares three possible American policies for nuclear weapons - superiority, equivalence and unilateral disarmament - and argues compellingly that, on any reasonable computation of probabilities and of the gravity of alternative outcomes, unilateral nuclear disarmament is both the prudent and (even more clearly) the moral choice. In contrast, our authors never stray far outside the narrow terms of debate set by the Carter arms-control establishment and the Reagan viewers-with-alarm.

The final chapter, on "World Order", continues the military

discussion for half of its length, leaving the remaining half-chapter for all the remaining questions of international ethics - that is to say for everything except questions relating to war. Although absurdly superficial, these pages contain the only point of any philosophical interest in the book. The authors make use at several points of R. M. Hare's distinction between "intuitive" and "critical" levels of moral thinking. Roughly, the intuitive level is what we teach children and use every day ourselves. At the critical level we subject these intuitions to appraisal "in a cool hour". Now, in their brief treatment of international relations, the authors daringly concede that large transfers from rich to poor countries would contribute to the satisfaction of more urgent rather than less urgent wants. But then they scramble back to safety by saying that people in rich countries do not have an intuition that they have any obligation to make themselves less well off to relieve suffering elsewhere, and there is not much hope of changing this. Clearly, however, on R. M. Hare's theory any such intuition must be deemed to fail the test at the critical level. What the authors really mean to say, but cannot without misquoting Hare's language, is that few people in fact are utilitarians, or likely to become utilitarians. But that is a general problem - for utilitarians as for utilitarianism, depending on one's theory about the basis of morality.

supposed; the loss of economically burdensome Eastern provinces and the willingness of the Americans to finance German recovery. Add to this a financially weak trade-union movement, chastened by its experience of the Third Reich, and reorganized along lines which inhibited demarcation disputes, and it will be seen that the Germans were well placed to exploit the opportunities offered by the post-war boom.

None the less, Ludwig Erhard's determination to allow market forces to have greater play in Germany than ever before was also an important stimulus to the economy, and Balfour gives him credit for it. He was right in the right place, as was Konrad Adenauer. By firmly opting for a government coalition which excluded the Social Democrats in 1949, *der Alte* was able to establish a *Stunde Null* in the German economy which absorbed many of the potential enemies of the democratic system, leaving the opposition to be dominated by Schumacher's party, whose loyalty to the Federal Republic was never in doubt. By putting the integration of the Federal Republic into the West higher on his list of priorities than the reunification of Germany, Adenauer also presented the new state suffocating itself in nationalist resentments, as the Weimar Republic had done. It was, of course, left to a subsequent Social Democratic leader, Willy Brandt, to recognize the status quo in Eastern Europe, leaving reunification as an ideal but distant objective.

Altogether it is a heartening story, which shows what common sense and respect for the rule of law can do when coupled with the will to win. There is a lesson here for all of us.

Modern Ireland: a bibliography of politics, planning research and development (734pp) Library Association. £44. 0 85365 04 1

Shannon, comprises more than 5,000 individual entries, Magazine, journal, report, scholarly journal, and important research in progress. Many facets of Ireland's political, economic and social life are arranged under 200 subject headings. Works on business, rural life, emigration, sociology, urban development, architecture, education, the Irish language, health, natural history, and many other topics are included. Studies of more than 100 Irish counties and cities, in both the Republic and Northern Ireland, are listed in special section.

There are, of course, other reasons for German success which relate to the particular conditions of the post-war world. Unencumbered by nationalist claptrap or other ideological baggage, the mass of the German population was allowed to apply its natural common sense to the problems it faced. The worst years were those immediately following defeat, and the Allied occupation authorities conveniently took responsibility for them. When German politicians once more stepped into the limelight conditions were beginning to improve, and the country's new democracy took the credit. Balfour is particularly good in his assessment of the so-called economic "miracle" after the currency reform in 1948. He points out that West Germany had many natural advantages: a surplus of labour - much of it skilled - eager to get back to work; factories whose productive capacity had been inflated during the war and which had not been nearly so comprehensively destroyed as is often

supposed; the loss of economically burdensome Eastern provinces and the willingness of the Americans to finance German recovery. Add to this a financially weak trade-union movement, chastened by its experience of the Third Reich, and reorganized along lines which inhibited demarcation disputes, and it will be seen that the Germans were well placed to exploit the opportunities offered by the post-war boom.

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## commentary

## A summer panorama

Marc Jordan

Seven Centuries of European Sculpture  
Heim Gallery

Summer is traditionally the time when the major London art dealers put on their grandest exhibitions. Agnew, Colnaghi and Wildenstein are all showing, with a typically well-mannered combination of scholarship, connoisseurship and commerce. Old Master paintings of outstanding quality drawn from their rich founts. Sculpture is, however, a rarer commodity. At Colnaghi, where the predominant tone of the current exhibition *Discoveries from the Cinquecento* is of the highest seriousness with major paintings by Piero di Cosimo, Bellini, Parmigianino, Rosso, Bronzino and Titian, there is only one contemporary sculpture: a sombre bronze bust of a nobleman once called Alfonso II d'Este by Leone but now given an interesting attribution to the little known Paduan sculptor Agostino Zoppo. It is true that there is also one element of slightly manic sculptural incongruity in the form of the brilliant plaster model by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux for his statue "La Danse" at the Paris Opéra. This violently *mouvementé* nineteenth-century work was presumably too large and fragile to move for the duration of the sixteenth-century exhibition.

Contrasts are, however, more constructive in the richly eclectic show at the Heim Gallery which this year has bravely given over its Summer Exhibition to "Seven Centuries of European Sculpture". It is predominantly Italian in flavour from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, and French in the eighteenth and nineteenth, but room is also found for one or two good Flemish and German pieces as well as a single example of Bohemian Baroque (Lazar Widmann's "Two Gladiators in Combat") which represents a particular interest of Alastair Laing, who has written the excellent catalogue.

The earliest sculptures, from central and northern Italy, wrenched from their original architectural settings, inevitably have a faintly melancholy air. Nevertheless the two most beautiful objects in the exhibition, a pair of elaborately stylized couchant lions carved from mottled red Verona marble, belong to a group. Given a Veronese origin and dated to the second part of the thirteenth century on the basis of affinities with the lions supporting the porch of S. Zeno, they perhaps once flanked steps at the entrance to a chapel; their polished backs are witness to the generations of Italian children who must have ridden them.

It is always fascinating to see a transitional or collaborative work in which the distinctive artistic personality of a young sculptor begins to emerge from the style of his master. While there is still a lot to be done to unravel the work of numbers of lesser quattrocento sculptors, Heim's group of three free-standing marble figures of Christ and two female saints (presumably once part of a larger altarpiece) seems to show the Luccese sculptor Matteo Civitelli freeing himself from the workshop types of his supposed master Andrea Guardi. Certainly there is an immediately discernible contrast between the fine, sweet modern Florentine style of the figures of Christ and the younger female saint and the heavier more naturalistic facial type and drapery of the older woman.

Any lingering doubts about the colouristic range and expressiveness of sculpture left over from the static mimetic rivalry with painting are soon swept away at this exhibition with its range of materials. Bronze, offering the possibility of subtle finishing by chiselling, patination or gilding, appeared particularly to the sensibilities of sixteenth-century collectors and went on being used for

small-scale works profane and sacred well into the seventeenth century. Examples here include a personification of Peace in elaborate *contrapposto* by the Venetian Mannerist Tiziano Aspetti (the catalogue tells us that the figure was originally a decoration for one of the elaborate fire dogs which formed such a feature of patrician Venetian households. Her gesture of dousing the flame of war is thus particularly appropriate). From the seventeenth century are a pair of elderly bearded saints by Camillo Mariani, chiseled and gilded superbly. But the most arresting bronzes are a pair of solid-cast sixteenth-century North German statues of Adam and Eve which are modelled and finished with refreshing vigour.

Terracotta is above all others the material which retains the impress of the sculptor's touch and personality. It was understandably popular with artists of the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a material for finished works, particularly portrait busts, as well as for sketches and models. One of the sculptors who used the material most successfully in the eighteenth century was the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne who is represented here by one of his delicate and informal female portrait studies. His masterpiece in this vein must be the mourning "Marquise de Feuquières" (at the Victoria and Albert Museum) who has a terracotta tear on her cheek. Though Heim's portrait of the eighteen-year-old Victoire Martin (signed and dated 1750) is not such a striking image it has much of the same psychological delicacy and brilliant handling of matiere.

Lemoyne was the teacher of many of the best of the next generation of French sculptors. Pigalle, Caffieri, Falconet and (briefly) Houdon passed through his studio. Augustin Pajou, one of the most precocious of his pupils, rarely managed to infuse his master's delicacy of touch into his terracotta portraits which have rather bland surfaces. But a small rococo sketch which is here convincingly attributed to Pajou and identified as the sketch model of "Hébé" exhibited at the Salon of 1771, dispels all doubts about his ability to handle the medium with sensitivity. Essentially a small-scale erotic boudoir sculpture, this figure who is being nuzzled insinuatingly by the eagle of Jove would perhaps not have translated successfully into the life-size marble intended for Madame du Barry but never executed.

Marble by contrast was the material best suited to Neo-classical portraiture. Houdon's crisply carved herm bust of the Abbé Barthélemy (antiquary and author of the *Voyage en Italie* *Anacharsis en Grèce*) is an example of the most uncompromisingly classical type adopted at the end of the eighteenth century. The head is presented full-face with the short hair dressed à l'antique. The chest and squared-off shoulders are naked and the bust sits down squarely without a plinth. The severity is softened, however, by Houdon's legendary ability to convey character: the suggestion of the ironic smile of an eighteenth-century *savant* plays about the mouth and eyes of this noble Roman. An altogether more playful approach to antiquity is exemplified by Joseph Chinard's Empire period bust of Mlle de Verninac as "Diana testing an arrow", an unusually late instance of allegorical portraiture.

Mlle de Verninac was the older half sister of Eugène Delacroix, and it is a work by Delacroix's close contemporary François Rodin which is one dramatic centre of the group of French Romantic works which brings this exhibition to a close. Rodin's screaming plaster head (cut from an unidentified relief) brings the visitor a long way from the serenity of the early Renaissance works with which the exhibition begins but it is a stimulating and sometimes surprising journey through an art which is sadly under-represented on the London commercial scene.

## Gravity and informality

Malcolm Rogers

John Michael Wright: The King's Painter  
Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh

On June 18, 1662 Samuel Pepys noted in his diary: "Walked to Lely's, the painter's, where I saw . . . most rare things. Thence to Wright's, the painter's; but Lord! the difference that is between their two works." Clearly Lely's more fulsome approach, his sonorous colouring, haughty and

strongest and most engaging. However hard he tried, and despite, no academic studies in Rome, who never succeeded in mastering the principles of human anatomy, Lely figures have a doll-like artificiality and he was particularly perceptive about the dress in the latest fashions, detail of their rich costume minutely observed. The prosperous goldsmith Sir Robert Vyner and his family seated in their garden at Swinley, Middlesex, which Pepys thought "to be most uniform in all that I ever saw and some things to excess", seem unbearably ostentatious and have been depicted by Lely in a provincial version of Italian mannerism, the emphasis is on refinement of line and colour, at the expense of character; the sitters are subdued by the occasion, Grooms for a photographer; only the little boy has lost his concentration and mood.

Wright's soldiers have a toughness, and sometimes, as in a case of one of his many local Catholic patrons, the "6th Duke of Norfolk", they are invested with the spirit of free people irrespective of all national boundaries; the national element in it must be no more than an ornament, an added individual charm. But *Art and Revolution* was written in 1849 when Wagner was fresh from the Dresden barricades and concerned to justify his solidarity with the high hopes of a revolutionary Europe. In the 1870s, when he was preparing *Parzifal*, he was concerned to establish his identity with the new German power confirmed at Sedan. Jibes against French "decadence" were common at Wahnfried. Production of *The Ring* in the presence of the new Kaiser signified the breakthrough of Nordic myth as what Yeats would call "the most passionate element in contemporary art". Wagner read Count Gobineau. Indications on how to regenerate the great European race issued from the pages of the *Bayreuth Blätter*.

This is the compost heap from which the *Bayreuther Festspiel* grew. Later Hitler told Wahnfried Wagner that he was going to make his father-in-law's last work into a new religion. Given as much, it is not surprising that a week before the present Festival opened *Der Ring* published an article saying that *Parzifal* would remain ideologically pernicious no matter how it was produced. The Bayreuth administration may have lost an opportunity by not commissioning for the programme an essay that dealt head-on with this persistent charge. Probably they consider such discussion in bad taste. In any case, their principal essay, by Hans Kling, resurrects the old suggestion that *Parzifal* may show the way towards a new universal religion.

But it is in portraits of women that he excels. Here his love of colour and acute sense of colour are combined with a subtle romanticism. This is evident in the best of the comparable modest half-lengths like the "Hoebe Arundell", with her engagingly upward glance, but is particularly affecting in the more ambitious portraits in landscapes. Typically, it is almost-eyed nymph maidens who progress through an ideal landscape under an evening sky; her dress is an indefinable shade of pinkish-white, her expression enigmatic. There is a delicacy of tone and mood, combined with what the catalogue perceptively calls in connection with the "Unknown Lady with a Riding Crop", "a sense of immanence", which is characteristic of Wright at his best, and of which the mature Lely was incapable.

There are thirty-six paintings in the exhibition, supplemented by engravings and illustrated books, as well as an imaginative recreation of a room in Wright's house in Covent Garden, full in its turn of books, pictures, engravings, antiquities – all the elevated clutter of a virtuoso collector. Outstanding is the "Lion Armour" (on loan from the Tower of London Armouries) which Wright may have owned, and which is worn in his parade portrait of the Duke of Albemarle.

From the Italian period only one certain work is known to survive: the modest and oddly characterless head and shoulders of Robert Bruce, later first Earl of Elgin, at the time, like Wright himself, a young man finding his way around the marvels of Rome. Paradoxically, it is the paintings which Wright produced in Britain (he worked in Scotland and Ireland as well as England) which show the Italian influence. This is most obvious in the ceiling which he painted in the early 1660s for Charles II's bedchamber in the Palace of Whitehall. The subject is "The Return of Astraea", treated as an allegory of the restoration of Charles II. How strange it is to see the Boscobel oak, uprooted by a gang of riotous soldiers, and carried aloft into the wonderful blue of a Mediterranean sky. The mixture is absolutely characteristic: high artistic ambition combined with a provincial literalism of mind.

It is in the portraits that this blend of the sophisticated and the naïve is



"Margaret Onley, Mrs George Vernon", 1660, by John Michael Wright, from the exhibition reviewed here.

## The brutal and the gentle touch

Stoddard Martin

Richard Wagner  
Parzifal  
Festspielhaus, Bayreuth

The Wagner being promoted by the current hierarchy at Bayreuth is the Wagner of what Shaw disparagingly called "the Love Panacea". Dr Oswald Bauer, press officer of the Festival and custodian of Wolfgang Wagner's ideological position, emphasizes that he is in sympathy with campaigners for nuclear disarmament, that he was disturbed by Thatcher's pursuit of the Falklands War, and that he is satisfied that principles of democracy and anti-racism are as firmly rooted in Germany now as their opposites were in the decade he was born. Last anyone be in doubt about the political complexion of the Festival today, the backs of all five of its programmes are covered with this quotation from *Art and Revolution* in three languages: "The Work of Art of the Future is intended to express the spirit of free people irrespective of all national boundaries; the national element in it must be no more than an ornament, an added individual charm."

But *Art and Revolution* was written in 1849 when Wagner was fresh from the Dresden barricades and concerned to justify his solidarity with the high hopes of a revolutionary Europe. In the 1870s, when he was preparing *Parzifal*, he was concerned to establish his identity with the new German power confirmed at Sedan. Jibes against French "decadence" were common at Wahnfried. Production of *The Ring* in the presence of the new Kaiser signified the breakthrough of Nordic myth as what Yeats would call "the most passionate element in contemporary art". Wagner read Count Gobineau. Indications on how to regenerate the great European race issued from the pages of the *Bayreuth Blätter*.

Hampe does not insist too rigorously on this framework, but uses its possibilities to reflect the opera's fluctuations of mood. Ferrando and Guglielmo, disguised as resplendent oriental potentates, stalk their prey during the hectic orchestral phrases which precede and punctuate Fiordiligi's "Come scoglio"; Guglielmo instinctively goes to address "Non state ritrosi" to Fiordiligi, before Alfonso, with an imperious wave of his walking-stick, instructs him to woo Dorabella instead. And Guglielmo, momentarily caught out, sings the aria of mood and atmosphere, its truth to human relationships – while always recognizing that the action is the result of a bet.

Accordingly, he begins with an empty marble floor, leading to the shimmering sea and framed by a false proscenium, to which a series of elegant sets is added: coffee-house, terrace, salon, dressing-room, all overlooking the Bay of Naples. When characters detach themselves from the main action to comment on it they move forward under the false proscenium into silhouette; a bottle and a purse remain silhouetted on the prompt-box at the front of the stage as reminders of the wager.

To some extent, this technique recalls Giorgio Strehler's brilliant *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in this same theatre, which used a false proscenium to separate a brightly-lit main action from arias sung in silhouette. But the ambiguities of *Costi fan Tutte* cannot be adequately represented in black-and-white terms, as Hampe is well aware. So, as the soft greys and blues of Mauro Pagano's costumes and set give way to the red and gold splendour of the "Albanians", the bright light and blue sky of the Bay of Naples darken to a sultry sunset over Vesuvius (as Dorabella likens her explosive feelings for Guglielmo to "in Vesuvio"). When such emotional ambiguities are replaced by the superficially cheerful

drawing from Christian and Buddhist mysticism.

With the fervour of the fallen Nietzsche, producer Götz Friedrich disclaims any association with attempts to glorify "Richard-Jesus-Buddha-Wagner" as the founder of a new religion. Friedrich's Wagner is no more than "one of the great men of theatre and European personalities". *Parzifal* is a rather kitsch story by an old man whose dreams were not much more mature than those of the little son and daughters disturbing the silence of the creative temple at Wahnfried. On an intellectual level *Parzifal* represents the old man's reflection on two thousand years of Christian tradition. With more sympathy than Nietzsche yet also with scepticism, Wagner was trying, according to Friedrich, to determine what of the "good and terrible" elements in that tradition were worth carrying on into the future.

For Friedrich the most "terrible" element is suggested by the Grail knights' lack of *mitleid* for Amfortas. Their insensitivity to their leader's pain is a microcosmic version of the great acts of cruelty that man has committed under the sign of the cross, or any emblem that confers righteous justification – swastika, hammer-and-sickle, Mogen David. Iconoclastically, Friedrich represents the Grail knights as brutes. This echoes nicely the persecution of heretics in the century in which the Grail story was written down. However it fails to take into account that in every version of that story, including Wagner's, the knights are themselves associated with heretical secrets, not with the murderous soldiers of the Roman orthodoxy. Worse, it fails to harmonize with the positive value Wagner invested in the Grail music.

Friedrich suggests that the knights' costumes more warm and detailed than

those of Friedrich's *Ring*. Bayreuth can evidently budget better than Covent Garden, and in the hands of Friedrich each added element opens a new area of meaning. When the walls of the forest come together to form the Grail Chapel, we recognize the boardroom of a modern skyscraper. Titelut appears on a video screen and glowers on his son throughout the latter's lamentation. Klingsohr has a giant oscilloscopic grid behind his control tower and, when this lights up with blips and puffs of smoke, we recognize the radar screens of the modern military. Friedrich's values, rooted in the 1930s, become increasingly clear. In the finale he has a group of girls enter the tumble-down enclave of the Grail, thus announcing that even this most misogynistic of Wagner's works can be drawn into a new, anti-sexist, unpunitive age.

Having raised these objections, one must go on to say that Friedrich's production is a revelation. Though he dislikes organized religion, he fills his *Parzifal* with the *mitleid* at the heart of Christian ethics. Time and again he has his characters touch one another in the simplest, most tender way. Gurnemanz is the fount of this *caritas*. He chases off the initiates who want to stone wayward Kundry; he alone of the Grail knights attends to Amfortas's pain; through the transformation scene he touches forehead with Parsifal in hopes that this might impart some wisdom to the ignorant boy. By the third act, when the world has been blasted by some unnamed holocaust, this cult of touch is the surviving source of hope. Parsifal's cure of Amfortas by touching the wound with the Spear is an affirmation of Gurnemanz's good example.

The action proceeds amid sets and costumes more warm and detailed than

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## Silhouette and chiaroscuro

Roger Warren

W. A. MOZART  
Costi fan Tutte  
Kleines Festspielhaus, Salzburg

Salzburg's new *Costi fan Tutte* is ambitious, stimulating, and very successful. Its director Michael Hampe, from Cologne, says in his programme notes that he aims to capture the opera's balance between identification with the characters and ironical commentary upon them by using the empty stage as a "vacuum to be filled with the opera's 'abundance of mood and atmosphere, its truth to human relationships' – while always recognizing that the action is the result of a bet.

Accordingly, he begins with an empty marble floor, leading to the shimmering sea and framed by a false proscenium, to which a series of elegant sets is added: coffee-house, terrace, salon, dressing-room, all overlooking the Bay of Naples. When characters detach themselves from the main action to comment on it they move forward under the false proscenium into silhouette; a bottle and a purse remain silhouetted on the prompt-box at the front of the stage as reminders of the wager.

To some extent, this technique recalls Giorgio Strehler's brilliant *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in this same theatre, which used a false proscenium to separate a brightly-lit main action from arias sung in silhouette. But the ambiguities of *Costi fan Tutte* cannot be adequately represented in black-and-white terms, as Hampe is well aware. So, as the soft greys and blues of Mauro Pagano's costumes and set give way to the red and gold splendour of the "Albanians", the bright light and blue sky of the Bay of Naples darken to a sultry sunset over Vesuvius (as Dorabella likens her explosive feelings for Guglielmo to "in Vesuvio"). When such emotional ambiguities are replaced by the superficially cheerful

final ensemble, all the scenery glides away, leaving the stage empty as at the start, with the soloists in hard white light "as if waking from a dream".

Hampe does not insist too rigorously on this framework, but uses its possibilities to reflect the opera's fluctuations of mood. Ferrando and Guglielmo, disguised as resplendent oriental potentates, stalk their prey during the hectic orchestral phrases which precede and punctuate Fiordiligi's "Come scoglio"; Guglielmo instinctively goes to address "Non state ritrosi" to Fiordiligi, before Alfonso, with an imperious wave of his walking-stick, instructs him to woo Dorabella instead. And Guglielmo, momentarily caught out, sings the aria of mood and atmosphere, its truth to human relationships – while always recognizing that the action is the result of a bet.

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lessen his triumph at winning his bet. In this scene, where it matters most, the production achieves its aim of capturing both the emotional truth of an experience and its ironical framework.

When, after his betrayal, James Morris's hitherto confident and extrovert Guglielmo returns to Margaret Marshall's reserved, placid Fiordiligi, the gap between them seems immense, and Fiordiligi and Ferrando exchange a piercing glance of regret as they pass each other on their way to join their original partners. "Realization is paid for by the loss of happiness", as the director puts it. This Fiordiligi is also sharply contrasted with Agnes Baltsa's vivacious Dorabella: "both sing beautifully. Kathleen Battle is a clumsy, fussy Despina, but José van Dam is a masterly Alfonso, who turns commanding, amused, compassionate, and triumphant. Riccardo Muti in the pit is as attentive to the details of the score as Hampe is on stage, especially in the trio "Sovve sia il vento", where he brings out the viola and woodwind figure which intensifies the yearning climax "ai nostri desi" with a vivid clarity which makes us hear it as if for the first time.

## TLS Crossword

We hope to run a literary crossword from time to time in the *TLS*. Readers are invited to submit puzzles for possible inclusion, and a prize of one year's subscription to the *TLS* is offered for the best three submitted by September 17. They should be in *The Times* Crossword format: 15 x 15, symmetrical, no word to have more than half its letters blind or to start with two blind letters or to have three consecutive blind letters; all words to be connected to at least two others. All clues should have some literary bearing. Entries (no more than two per person) with clues to duplicate and answers on the second set, and explanations of literary references, should be sent to *TLS* Crossword, *Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC4M 8BX.

## New Oxford Books: Literature

## The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth

VI. The Later Years  
Part 3 1835-1839  
Edited by Alan G. Hill

This third volume of *The Later Years*, which follows Wordsworth into the troubled years of early Victorian England, provides indispensable material for understanding the later phases of his career while also offering innumerable insights into the great poems of his prime. This new edition contains over six hundred letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth that have never been published before. Second edition £35

John Clare's Birds  
Edited by Eric Robinson and Richard Fitter

John Clare has been described as 'the finest poet of Britain's minor naturalists and the finest naturalist of all Britain's major poets'. In this collection of his writings he can be seen at the height of his powers in both roles. Clare's keen observations of the birds of his native Northamptonshire combined with his natural poetic gifts to produce vivid descriptions of landscape and bird life, here illustrated by the wildlife artist Robert Gillmor. £8.95

## The Life of Katherine Mansfield

Antony Alpers

Until recently it has not been possible to deal freely and frankly with all the events of Katherine Mansfield's life. Now, drawing on newly opened manuscript collections, private papers, and personal contacts, Antony Alpers has been able to expand his 1953 biography in a new, award-winning interpretation of this volatile and vulnerable genius. A definitive biography, and as such utterly engrossing. *The Times*. Illustrated £3.95 Oxford Paperbacks

## The Heart of England

Edward Thomas

The title of this collection of Edward Thomas's essays indicates exactly what Thomas sought to express when he wrote them. All his writings bear witness to the fact that the English countryside was a subject very close to his heart, and this volume succeeds in capturing the very essence of England. £2.95

## The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson

Volumes 3 and 4  
Edited by G.A. Wilkes

This edition of Jonson's plays is a modernized version of the text of Volumes III-VI of the Oxford *Jonson*, edited by C.H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 1925-52. Volume 3 contains *Volpone*, *Epicoene*, *The Alchemist*, and *Catharine*; Volume 4 contains *Bartholomew Fair*, *The Devil is an Ass*, *The Staple News*, *The New Inn*, and *The Magnetic Lady*. £45 each

## Oxford University Press

John Clare's Birds



# Getting at the ruling classes

Harold Hobson

KEITH BAXTER  
Cavell  
Chichester Festival Theatre

There is a moment when Keith Baxter's play *Cavell* springs into life with a vitality which it never afterwards loses. This surge of blood is due partly to the subtlety of Baxter's writing, and partly to the brilliant performance of Aubrey Woods as Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary during the First World War. A splendid aristocratic figure in silk knee breeches and ceremonial coat, Sir Edward in his official room is listening in polite but total boredom to a list of British soldiers killed in the most recent action in Flanders. Then suddenly the languid form becomes flushed with energy, and Sir Edward darts across the room to the window with all the speed that in the upper classes is compatible with grace and composure. Through that window he has seen a hero. Actually a hero! The long roster of the names of hundreds of dead may be nothing but a bore, but a hero - that surely is something which a man of sensibility and taste cannot view without excitement.

Such is the picture that Baxter draws of the British governing class at the time of the execution of Nurse Cavell. Grey is in fact the least unattractive of the lot. If he is different about how many people get killed (he had never

wanted the war anyhow) he wears the greatness of his office with grace and distinction, never losing his temper, never being discourteous, never showing any anxiety though he is sure the war is being lost.

For the rest of the Cabinet Baxter allows no such mitigating circumstances. He pursues them with a hatred that even Brenton or Hare might deem excessive. He never lets us forget that Churchill put the troops into Tony-pandy. His Lord Derby is a booming, senseless boozier, and his Asquith a drab, Puritan hypocrite. His Lloyd George (played by Philip Madoc with more of Lloyd George's appearance than of his magnetism) is a total scoundrel, a man that lago and Ullrich Heep would both have refused to shake hands with. It is he rather than the Germans who is responsible for Cavell's death. Revoltingly rejoicing in his own cleverness, he puts it to the Cabinet that in condemning Cavell the Germans have fallen into a trap from which we must do nothing to release them. They will be reviled by humanity for their crime, unless we intervene to save her. Therefore, with the willing co-operation of America, simply let things take their course, as on the British. Whether all this is actually true I don't know, since Baxter does not reveal his sources, but the management assures me that it is accurate. Anyway it provides an intricate and intriguing background to Edith Cavell's story; and at least it shows that Baxter is waving no flannoyantly patriotic flag.

Author, Author

## Competition No 83

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than September 3. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 83" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on September 10.

1 Supported by an impregnable sense of justice but still dangerously fuming, Lucia went back to her garden-room, to tranquillize herself with an hour's practice on the new piano. Very nice tone; she and George would be able to start their musical hours again now. This afternoon, perhaps, if he felt up to it after the tragic news, a duet might prove tonic. Not a note had she played during the triumphant week at Risholme. Scales first then, and presently she was working away at a new Mozart, which she and George would subsequently read over together.

2 She had spoken to it about George; played his favourite airs upon it; sat for long evening hours, touching, to the best of her simple art, melancholy harmonies on the keys, and weeping over them in silence. It was not George's relic. It was valueless now. The next time that old Sedley asked her to play, she said it was shockingly out of tune, that she had a headache, that she couldn't play.

3 Madame Viatatzes continued for a short while at the piano as the romantic composition for four hands trailed off into a series of solo improvisations. Without turning her slightest, and for Mrs Gibson still splendid carnation back, she informed her visitors, "Angelos is the victim of his bladder. He's practically worn a truck, poor darling, tramping to the bathroom in the night."

She sounded a final treble note and closed the lid of the upright piano.

ACADEMY celebrates the JAMES JOYCE centenary

BARBARA JEFFORD - MILO O'SHEA  
MAURICE ROEVES - T. P. MCKENNA  
JAMES JOYCE'S masterpiece  
**ULYSSES**  
Directed by JOSEPH STRICK

# Art Deco egoism

Robert Halsband

MOLIÈRE  
The Misanthrope  
Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles

This production of Molière's most provocative masterpiece, presented by the Center Theatre Group, is a brilliant success. To begin with, the director of Molière in English must decide which of the many translations to use. About half of his comedies, including *Le Misanthrope*, are written in characteristic alexandrines. A translation in prose or unrhymed lines falls flat on the ear, however precise it is. The translation by Richard Wilbur used here, easily the best one extant, employs the most characteristic English verse form, heroic couplets. His translation, first published in 1955, was played in London in 1967, when one asked for "lines not chimes". Not having seen that production I can only conjecture the fault to have been that of the actors for landing on the rhymes like corny gags; as played here at the Mark Taper, they are understated and unobtrusive yet add a resonance to the lines.

Written in 1666, *The Misanthrope*, if played in the baroque costumes and trappings of Louis XIV, can be distractingly full of swish and flourish, with plumes and capes and swords and clicking high heels. If transposed to another era, would the play work? It should if its truths are universal, as indeed they are, and if the era suits characters and plot. This production is placed in the early twentieth century; the few furniture props are in the style of Art Deco, while the sumptuous costumes (beautifully designed by Sam Kirkpatrick) are based on the work of Erté. The Wilbur translation, which achieves a timeless quality by avoiding costume-drama diction, easily fits its

updating of two and a half centuries. The text hardly needed to be changed; my ear caught only one alteration. Arsiné goes to her "car" instead of her "coach". In addition, she disdains "le rebout de Madame" ("leaving") Wilbur's version is "gigolos" (a word that crept into English from the French in 1927). The setting and costumes, along with an epigrammatic crispness, give the curious illusion that one is witnessing an amalgam of Congress and Wilde.

This is no doubt fortified by the spirited acting of the company. Almost no one so easily be a ranting, boating misanthrope; not as played by René Auberjonois. His long tirades are never monotonous; and he manages to win our reluctant sympathy even though he is too egotistical for his own or his friends' comfort. The irresistible Célimène (Madolyn Smith) looks fragile but stands up to Alceste and the other suitors as well as to her friend and rival Arsiné (Katherine McNulty). Of the smaller roles, Keene Curtis as Oronte, the would-be poet, plays his part with a breadth of style just short of farce though it never breaks through the comic frame. The star of the performance, I should guess, never appears on stage - the director, Diana Maddox. For the company plays as an ensemble, with a fluency, variety and ease that capture the audience. This kind of "classical" acting in English, rare outside Britain, is achieved without any phony RADA accent; clear, direct, American diction can caress the ear with the same pleasure that offered by the RSC, particularly since it serves a text as uncluttered and cleanly poetic as Richard Wilbur's.

A Frenchman visiting Los Angeles recently was asked what he thought of the city, and replied that he couldn't see the point of it. Well, with such productions as this at the Mark Taper, Los Angeles is in danger of acquiring a great deal of point as a centre for superb drama not on film.

## Astrology and Science

Sir, - Although I am neither an astronomer nor an astrologer, may I correct an assertion of J. Bruce Brackenridge (July 9) about titles on astrology signs? In explaining the "sun sign", he says that "All those who were born between the first day of spring and April 20 are first degree of the sun was then in the thirty-degree band of the ecliptic around the constellation Aries." But this confuses "sign" and "constellation".

Most astrologers, I suspect, are well aware that the "sign" of Aries (as distinct from the "constellation" of stars called Aries) begins with an astronomical point determined by the place in the ecliptic where the vernal equinox occurs. Since the time of Hipparchos in the second century BC, it has been known that this point "regresses" annually on the ecliptic. Hence the not-so-logical term "precession of the equinoxes". It takes about 2,150 years for the point of the vernal equinox to transit a constellation. Some astrologers maintain that while this equinoctial point was in the constellation Pisces, the world was in a "Piscean" age.

I understand that the vernal equinoctial point is currently at about 10° of the constellation Pisces. Since some astrologers impute a rather wide "orb of influence" to the sun, they reckon that the "Age of Aquarius" began to dawn about the time of the American and French Revolutions and has continued its Uranian upheavals into our century. Lord help us to survive to the Age of Capricorn.

FRANK D. GILLIARD  
Department of History, California State University, Hayward, California 94542.

Sir, - It is heartening to find the subject of astrology dealt with in a fair way in a responsible journal; I congratulate you and J. Bruce Brackenridge on achieving this (July 9). But he is hardly fair to my admittedly "popular" book *The New Astrologer*. Being a physicist, he is unlikely to have much sympathy with or understanding of what he calls the "artist" approach, so I will pass that by without comment.

Brackenridge fails to note that my book is resolutely anti-"occult" throughout, and, by tearing through short passages out of context, manages to make it sound as though my approach is confused, whereas it is simply open-minded, which is the impression the introductory material conveys when read as a whole. In any

case, he misses the irony contained in my last sentence, in which I say that I do not "believe" in astrology. I don't: I just try it out. Furthermore, my book covers a great deal more "scientific" ground than Eysenck and Nias's *Astrology: Science or Superstition?* also reviewed by Brackenridge.

Brackenridge states that my short commentaries on certain historical figures are "incorrect or confused". I think the fair-minded reader will discover, on further enquiry, that whatever Brackenridge finds wrong or confused are undecided questions: we simply don't know what certain people really thought, as we don't have their complete writings - or they had to distort what they said in the interests of their personal safety. In the case of Kepler, it would have been stupid, as well as confusing, to try to explain the highly complex rationale of his "new aspects": the fact is that he introduced quintiles, which is what I want to say. One might as well accuse a writer who stated that Kuhn discovered the antidepressant properties of imipramine for inaccuracy, on the grounds that Kuhn was looking for an antipsychotic agent, and made his discovery by serendipity. As for Newton: he never stated his support for astrology, but some may infer it - and there is no evidence that he opposed it, which is odd.

I can only be glad that Professor Brackenridge has found what Einstein really thought about life. I don't interpret what Einstein said about not "being sure" about anything as a simple statement that the laws of physics are co-variant. I rather suspect, anyhow, that Einstein's attitude to life somewhat resembled that of Shakespeare to his printed text: he didn't care. Perhaps I should not have brought him in.

As to Professor Brackenridge's last point: that "it is unlikely that this book will convince anyone of [astrology's] validity". Whether it deserves to or not, it has in fact caused many educated sceptics to revise their view. If he will send me the time, date and place of birth of anyone he knows well, telling me only their sex, I will convince him likewise.

MARTIN SEYMOUR-SMITH.  
36 Hollis Hill, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex.

## Twentieth-century Writing

Sir, - Since Secker and Warburg joined forces with the Arts Council to reissue some classic twentieth-century writing, we have published Wyndham Lewis's *The Revenge for*

Love and Norman Douglas's *Siren Land*. In concentrating on the twentieth century we are deliberately looking at a narrow band of work. The great novels of the century are, by and large, in print and available. It has to be said that much that is published disappears and probably deserves to do so. Our interest is in that group of books lying between these two, where for one reason or another they have been allowed to disappear from public view, although they deserve on grounds of literary merit to remain available.

We have a list of interesting possibilities for future titles. Nevertheless we would like to invite your readers to participate in the process of suggesting titles, and to let us know of any works of literature in the above category which they have discovered to be out of print and which, in their view, merit republication.

PETER GROSE,  
KATE MARSH.  
Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd,  
54 Poland Street, London W1.

## 'Civill Considerations'

Sir, - The Folger Shakespeare Library of Washington, DC, owns two apparently identical copies of the English translation of Remigio Nannini's (c1521-81) book of precepts, *Civill Considerations*, published in London a few weeks after the ill-fated Essex rebellion of February 1601. The translator, W. T., seems to be William Traheron, not registered in the DNB (see my article in *Notes and Queries*, December 1981.) Although opening with identical titles pages bearing the same date of publication, 1601, the two Folger copies representing two versions of the English Nannini differ as to the texts of their respective first chapters. One of the two books is rare, in so far as there are only two other copies known extant at present (in Marsh's Library, Dublin, and in the University of Illinois Library, Urbana) that preserve the text of the controversial and politically objectionable Chapter One. It argues, in a "Machiavellian" vein, that if a secret enterprise is to succeed, "it ought to be dissembled, and absolutely denied" (p. 1); moreover, "a lie may be so cunningly coloured and dissembled, that it may be taken for a truth" (p. 2).

Presumably as a consequence of official or self-imposed censorship, this material, no doubt considered unsuitable for publication in the tense political climate of the immediate post-Exeter period, was expurgated from the majority of copies of the English Nannini, while these

three rare copies preserving the original Chapter One but omitting Chapter Eighty managed to slip through "quality control" or the grip of censorship and have, luckily for us, survived to the present day. The other Folger copy, again, is one of those twenty-one known extant at present in which the "subversive" original Chapter One was cancelled and replaced with the "constructive" text of the original Chapter Eighty. It argues that, in order for a ruler to prevent the outbreak of a rebellion, he should heed "the advice and counsel of great Princes" (p. 1). None of these textual and bibliographical peculiarities is recorded in *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England . . . 1475-1640* (2nd edn, 1976, p. 172, entry No 18348).

In addition to being censored or expurgated, this latter Folger copy is unique in so far as it is the only English Nannini containing a rare portrait of Elizabeth I, a black-and-white engraving (256 x 167 mm) unnoticed by art specialists. Although it lacks the artist's signature, our research has tentatively identified it as the work of James Hullett (d.1711). It is a more or less exact inversion of an engraving produced by George Vertue (1684-1756) for Rapin and Tindal's folio-size *History of England* (1725). In F. M. O'Donoghue's *A Descriptive and Classified Catalogue of Portraits of Queen Elizabeth* (1894, p. 76), the Vertue, described in entry No 188, is followed by the only known description of the Hullett (entry No 189): "Exact copy from the last, reversed, same size. By J. Hullett". A detailed study has shown that not only are O'Donoghue's description and characteristics of the Hullett incorrect, for it is far from an "exact copy" . . . reversed" of the Vertue but it contains at least ten more or less substantial

instances of departure from its model, the Vertue. Moreover O'Donoghue does not state when and where the Hullett was published, if at all.

The only complete Hullett print, and one of a somewhat better quality than the Folger portrait, has been located in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. Previously, this copy had been owned by Dr Richard Mead, who died in 1754. Not only are the Queen's features in the somewhat darker Windsor Hullett sharper than are those in the paler Folger portrait but the former, moreover, contains Hullett's name printed in the right bottom corner, while in the Folger copy the author's name, if ever it was there at all, seems to have been cut off so as to make the print fit the smaller size of the Nannini book. Nor are all measurements in the two prints identical.

There is no inner connection, at best only a symbolic one, between the English Nannini of 1601 and the portrait created between 1732 and 1754, that is, from about 131 to 153 years later and, thus, not meant for general inclusion in the book. One of its later owners - signed on the title page is "Humphrey Fowle de Rotherfield", perhaps of the eighteenth century - may have had the picture bound in for the purpose of enhancing the value of his volume and, perhaps, pointing out that it had been published (and censored?) during the reign of Elizabeth I.

JAN SIMKO.  
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44322.

*Synhed of Man* by G. Wilson Knight, a notice of which appeared in our July 30 issue, is published in this country by Regency Press at £3.20.

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# Praising the emperor

James Trilling

SABINE G. MACCORMACK

Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity  
417pp, plus 63 black-and-white  
plates. University of California Press.  
£27.75.  
0 520 03779 U

Sabine McCormack's *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* is a study of changing conceptions of the Roman emperor's relation to his subjects from the fourth to the sixth century, as revealed in three recurring events: *adventus* (the emperor's arrival and formal welcome in a city), *conservatio* (the divinization of an emperor after his death) and the accession of a new emperor to the throne.

As the book's title implies, McCormack calls these three events ceremonies, although she never actually defines a ceremony. Yet the way in which the word is understood plays a crucial role in her perception of the subject and in our appraisal of the book. Webster's *New International Dictionary* (2nd edition) defines ceremony as "a formal act, or series of acts, often of a symbolic character, prescribed by law, custom, or authority . . . in the conduct of important matters . . . and the celebration of notable events . . . By this or any similar definition, neither *adventus* nor accession is properly speaking, a ceremony. Accession means coming to power; it is a political and in some cases a military event, and has nothing to do, intrinsically, with prescribed formal acts. This does not mean that it has nothing to do with them in practical terms. Historically, accession to the throne (as opposed to the less formal assumption of power in a nominally republican state) has always been surrounded with ceremony. Nevertheless, there remains a fundamental distinction between accession and the ceremonies of accession, of which coronation is by far the most important. Coronation is by nature ceremonial: it is a series of formal acts whose only purpose is to symbolize and confirm the reality of accession. Accession can take place without coronation, but coronation without accession - or the fiction or hope of accession - is meaningless.

Like accession, *adventus* has both existence and meaning apart from ceremony. When the ruler travels, he must arrive. Arrival gives rise to formal welcome almost as inevitably as accession gives rise to coronation, but the act of arrival and the ceremony it evokes are not identical. *Conservatio* is somewhat different. In its simplest form, that of a senatorial decree that the deceased emperor was now divine, it can be regarded as a ceremonial adjunct to the imperial funeral. It is nevertheless necessary to distinguish between the simple decree and the complex enactments which were often used to give physical reality to the emperor's apotheosis. In the strictest, most reductive sense, the latter are no more ceremonial than the former. In practice, to ignore the distinction is comparable to confusing accession and coronation. It means ignoring the difference between a political event and the formal acts which were elaborated around it.

This difference is above all visual. The purpose of imperial ceremony is to turn a political fact into an aesthetic and emotional experience by giving it visual and dramatic reality. In her introduction, McCormack explicitly acknowledges the importance of visual experience in Late Roman life, and repeatedly quotes Gibbon's phrase "splendid theatre" as a description of the imperial court. Yet by not distinguishing between the ceremonial aspects of an event and the event in its entirety, she obscures precisely the visual element which she seems at first to emphasize. The book will therefore disappoint a reader who, drawn by the title and introduction, expects a guide to the visual aspects of Late Roman ceremony. On this subject, Ramsey MacMullen's article "Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus" (*The Art Bulletin*, 46, 1964, pp 435-55), is much more illuminating.

McCormack's actual purpose is very different. The three events which she traces were all occasions on which the emperor was praised according to established conventions. The main form which this praise took was that of orations called panegyrics. Political doctrines similar to those expressed in the panegyrics were also elaborated in visual images, either allegorically or through direct representation of the event. What McCormack sets out to do is to analyse panegyric and imperial art as complementary expressions of Late Roman political thought.

The book's argument is difficult to follow. McCormack's prose can be opaque, for example. "The ceremonial *adventus* at its different stages of development showed a society capable of integration *vis-à-vis* its gods and rulers, and within its own different parts." Her conclusions can seem too abstract, as on the many occasions when she refers to the establishment of "a relationship between the emperor and his subjects", as though that were an end in itself, without saying what kind of relationship. There is a lack of clear inference which often makes it virtually impossible to see how one sentence or paragraph follows from another. Nevertheless, several major themes emerge, perhaps the most important being the changing meaning of *consensus*, a central concept in Roman political thought. In the earlier days of the empire, the emperor's power was intimately linked, at least in theory, to the support of the populace and to their active participation in the process of being ruled. In contrast, the Byzantine state was based on a "hierarchy of God, emperor, and subjects, where the subjects . . . remain inert".

Within the framework of this evolution, the three main sections of the book complement each other: each event shows a different facet of the change from Roman to Byzantine concepts of the emperor's role. In *adventus*, the crucial change is from the Tetrarchic and fourth-century idea of continual movement through the empire as both the real and the symbolic fulfilment of the emperor's responsibilities, to the circumstances which the emperor faced when he arrived in the city. In the fourth century, emperors lived in capitis and delegated military operations to generals. *Conservatio* and imperial funerals generally, which provided an opportunity to formulate the emperor's relation to the gods or to God, reveal two fundamental shifts. The first is from the human to the divine election of the emperor. "In the first and second centuries the pattern of the emperor's life had dictated that he be chosen by the people and, in some way, by the gods . . . rule and be rewarded for his toils with *conservatio* after his death. This pattern changed in the third, and especially the fourth, centuries; emperors who were already the chosen of the gods had no need of *conservatio* and the human approval which it implied, because to an increasing degree a supra-human status became theirs at the moment of accession."

The second shift is a consequence of the rise of Christianity. The concepts and symbols through which the emperor had been seen (and depicted in art) as the centre of the cosmos were transferred to Christ, *rex regnantium* ("King of those who rule"). At the same time, the emperor was incorporated into a hierarchical scheme implying a far more direct and explicit continuity between heaven and earth than any formulation of pagan imperial theology. Finally, in accession, the significant change is from a military to a civilian conception of power. This is visible in the actual ceremonial of coronation. The purely military practice of raising the new emperor on a shield and crowning him with a torque are first subsumed into a developing urban, civilian and Christian ceremonial, and finally abandoned altogether. The emphasis on military victory as a concomitant to the assumption of power is thereby modified. "Victory has become more metaphysical in this context, and [the emperor] is no longer crowned with a laurel wreath, but with a crown of stars." (p. 100)

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elections; the hippodrome supplanted the military camp, as the people supplanted the soldiers."

Panegyric and imperial art belong to the realm of propaganda; both their style and content are rigidly controlled. McCormack warns us of this, yet despite her own warnings she seems continually to ignore the distinction between political fiction and political reality. Speaking of *adventus*, she says, "The formal welcome of the *de facto* emperor was obligatory. Nevertheless, emperor was obliged, as not exhorting by a tyrant, it had to have an air of spontaneity." But after quoting from a panegyrist's description of one such occasion, she comments, "It was a spontaneous, inspired *consensus universorum* . . ." The occasion to which she refers is Julian's arrival at Antioch in 362, but no allusion is made to conditions in the city at that time. Antioch was experiencing severe economic difficulties, and the populace doubtless welcomed the opportunity to petition the emperor directly. At the same time, most of that populace was Christian, and therefore deeply opposed to Julian's religious policies. Such cross-currents would have been conducive to many kinds of spontaneous behaviour, but when McCormack speaks of *consensus* in this context one can only assume that she means the fiction of *consensus*. It is unfortunate that she nowhere states this explicitly. To do so, far from damaging her arguments, might actually strengthen them: one way of measuring the importance of a political fiction is by the extent to which it flies in the face of reality.

The section on *conservatio* has a similar failing. McCormack refers on several occasions to the judgment passed on the dead emperor, seen in terms of the alternatives *conservatio* and *damnatio memoriae*. The former entails "the honorable burial of recognized emperors", the latter "the scattering of the ashes or bones of one labelled as a tyrant or usurper". She presents this as a real choice, the result of senatorial scrutiny and evaluation, and ignores the extent to which the verdict on the departed emperor reflected the will of his successor. In our own century, the vicissitudes of Stalin's reputation are a reminder of the way in which the posthumous fate of a ruler can be shaped by the realities of power.

McCormack's wish to integrate verbal and visual material is praiseworthy, but her treatment of art is marred by many serious errors of scholarship and interpretation. On p 31 Tetrarchic portrait sculpture is called "realistic". The Tetrarchic style is by far the least realistic major style in all of Late Antiquity. On p 35 a coin of Constantine is used to illustrate a passage from Eusebius which describes that emperor "looking upwards eagerly". In fact, this coin shows him with his face lowered, so that the slightly upturned eyes make his gaze barely level with the ground. The choice of this example is inexplicable, since coins and medallions depicting Constantine in the attitude described by Eusebius are not lacking; one of the most striking is in the Cabinet de Médailles. On p 43 the *adlocutio* and *largitio* panels from the Arch of Constantine are said to exemplify an "unselfconscious familiarity". Constantine's feelings with his subjects. It is hard to imagine a stiffer and more regimented relation between ruler and ruled than these reliefs express. On p 70 the bronze statue of an emperor at Barletta is said to be "holding a globe and long sceptre or standard . . ." Both arms are in fact restored, so however likely he is to have held those attributes, there is no way of knowing for sure. On p 74 McCormack quotes from Procopius's description of the Chalki mosaic depicting Justinian and Theodora at the centre of the mosaic victory celebration. The mosaic is no longer extant, and is known only from Procopius's account. Yet McCormack says that it "had a high degree of realism, in that it incorporated historical personages and even portrayed their mood . . ." To assert the realism of any work of art on the basis of a written description alone is rash. As a student of artificiality,

McCormack should know that in this period the representation and description of moods was governed by a set of conventions as artificial as any in panegyric. Finally, on p 220 the silver *missorium* of Theodosius I is said to depict "the moment when the emperor acquired tenure of the palace". This is not true: it represents the bestowal of an imperial commission on an official. It may be relevant to the study of accession, but it does not depict accession, and the blurring of this distinction serves no useful purpose.

Misapprehensions like these do great harm to McCormack's arguments, since they are bound to undermine the reader's confidence in her ability to handle visual material. Even when her visual analyses are valid, they tend to be mechanical and jejune, as though motivated less by appreciation than by a search for the most literal of one-to-one correspondences between art and panegyric. Thus in commenting on a passage from Claudian which compares Honorius appearing before the people to a sacred image brought out of its shrine, she notes that according to Ammianus Marcellinus the emperor could deliberately hold himself immobile, in imitation of a work of art. She concludes: "there is thus a connection between Claudian's Honorius and the statuesque emperors . . . on the obelisk base of Theodosius and the column base of Arcadius in Constantinople." A connection, yes, but only of the most superficial kind.

Is there a more fruitful way of approaching the problem of relation between art and ceremony in Late Antiquity or in general? One possibility is to begin with ceremony itself. Its purpose - here of course I refer to state ceremony, especially that of the Late Roman Empire - is to concretize and adorn the realities of power. This purpose is accomplished in three ways, or on three levels. These levels do not constitute types of ceremony, though different types of ceremony inevitably operate on different levels. They are not mutually exclusive. Finally, they are not intended to suggest a hierarchy of importance, since all are essential aspects of ceremony as a whole.



A marble bust of a lady, Justinianic work from Constantinople, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; reproduced from Cornelia Vermeulen's Greek and Roman Sculpture in America (41-pp, with 40 half-tone illustrations and 30 in colour, University of California Press, £37.50, 0 520 04324 3).

Rather, they are ways of perceiving ceremony, which apply equally to an original audience and to the modern interpreter.

On the first level, ceremony provides the illusion of stability and the chaotic and often violent reality of politics. Neither the form nor the content of the ceremony matters so much as its predictability. On the second level, ceremony is a symbolic expression of ideology. Unlike the first level, the second depends heavily on interpretation. However, to interpret ceremony on this level, one must assume not only that it has symbolic content, but that this content was widely understood and taken seriously. The difficulty here is that while one may strive to show the prevalence of a set of ideas in a particular culture at a given time, one can never be sure of the extent to which these ideas had real meaning and influence. The most specific the group and occasion, or the population of a city turning out to greet the emperor, the less certain can be that a particular set of ideas obtained. Thus, however deeply one interprets, the actual mechanism by which ceremony accomplished its ends may remain elusive.

The third level of ceremony is that of spectacle, which combines visual, verbal, musical and other effects. A royal wedding provides a happy example of this. The most important currents influencing our perception of ceremony are religious ritual and military drill and display. Military display has become an increasingly important element of state ceremony. This is especially true of royalist and militarist societies, but it is not confined to them. In the United States, the uniquely phallic marching of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier - a transcending of the human condition in a way that defies concrete analysis - Obviously, not all ceremony is so intensely artificial, nor does it have to be to create an emotional effect. Nevertheless, the power of military display can provide an important insight into Roman ceremonial. It is essential to recognize, as a spectacle that it is not directly of emotions, without any need for symbolism. Ramsey MacMullen

makes it clear that a Late Roman *adventus* was both a visually compelling event and also, by design, a frightening one.

These three levels of ceremony have their counterparts in art. On the first level mere depiction of the ceremony is sufficient to the purpose of the image. It is a reminder of the ceremony, and hence of the supposed power and stability of the institutions for the ceremony stands. The fourth-century reliefs on the Arch of Constantine, or the mosaics of Justinian and Theodora in the Church of S Vitale in Ravenna, may be understood on this level. On the second level, the emphasis shifts from literal representation to symbolic gesture and detail. It could be argued that the artistic counterpart to the second level of ceremony need not represent the ceremony directly, so long as it expresses the same ideas as the ceremony. Images of the emperor endowed with symbols of power and victory, such as one finds on consular dyptics, exemplify this level of representation.

The third level seems identical to the first, since it involves the depiction of ceremony rather than the expression of ideas through symbolism. In fact, it could not be more different. On this level, art does not simply recall the event, but attempts to embody those aspects of it which impress themselves most directly on the viewer. By means of form and composition it is possible to capture the intense, often intimidating artificiality that sets ceremony apart from everyday action. This is most clearly to be seen in the depiction of processions; the movement of the eye over long lines of figures creates a rhythm analogous to that of figures moving in actuality. Just as the intensity of a ceremony depends in great measure on disciplined uniformity of movement, the intensity of its artistic re-creation is regulated by the extent to which the artist imposes on the scene those patterns and rhythms which convey a single ordered flow of events.

Considered purely in terms of this effect, the most successful work of ceremonial art is probably not any creation of the Greco-Roman world, but rather the Achaemenid reliefs from Persepolis. Such single-mindedness, extending in many cases to the lack of differentiation between figures, seems largely alien to the classical tradition. The processional frieze from the Parthenon adopts a far looser and more relaxed approach to ceremony, and the sacrificial procession on the *Ara Pacis* in Rome tempers its high seriousness with the addition of informal elements. Only in the sixth century, with the procession of saints in the Church of S Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, does order take unquestioned precedence.

In both art and ceremony, the counterpart to disciplined movement is disciplined stillness. The enthroned emperor expresses a power and transcendence analogous to that of the imperial procession. Whereas the effect of a procession is conveyed by restricting the eye to a single rhythm, the effect of a static scene is conveyed by the imposition of a single point of view. This is accomplished chiefly through symmetry and frontality. The *adlocutio* and *largitio* scenes on the Arch of Constantine, and the *missorium* and obelisk base of Theodosius, clearly illustrate this approach to the depiction of ceremony. Finally, special attention should be paid to the mosaics of Justinian and Theodora in S Vitale. By depicting the two processions frontally, the mosaicist has brought together the static and dynamic currents in Late Antique ceremonial art. This imaginative response to the traditional demands of ceremony is probably unique in its time.

The question of the relation of art and ceremony, in any age, remains unanswered, not because it is unanswerable but because it is actually many questions. An awareness of the levels on which ceremony operates, and on which it is schooled in art, can help define the fields of study which larger questions encompass. In particular, it can make clear the difference between two equally valid approaches to the study of ceremony: as a part of the history of ideas; and as an attempt to understand that most elusive of connections in the arts, the connection between form and meaning.

When you return as if you had never left - what they will say to you will startle - they who have grown towards walking-sticks out from local hillside briars, and who have learnt rumours of your whereabouts by heart, enough to flay the memory of the boy once excellent at Latin who never rolled his hands on village cattle and who now stands there, amid boxes carrying clothes of a future fashion, back at the mat that once felt your tread, as eyes find the paper in your pocket and you know voices speak, behind windows but to you will say nothing, not ever.

Matthew Sweeney

## The promise of chaos

Alan Davidson

NORMAN LEWIS

A Dragon Apparent: Travels in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam  
317pp, Eland Books, 53 Eland Road, London SW11 5JX, £3.95.  
0 907871 00 3

Norman Lewis's visit to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in 1950 resulted in a vivid and thoughtful book, which has acquired additional significance over the past three decades. A series of carefully observed pictures of Indochina before the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu and the internationalization of the war in Vietnam is of obvious value to the historian.

I lived and travelled in Indochina for two years in the mid 1970s and by then many more dragons were apparent. Lewis records very occasional encounters with American missionaries and one encounter with an American journalist. Apparently there were no Russians, the Chinese were invisible (apart from emigrants) and the United Nations organizations which were later to be so widely

## Chams and shamans

Dennis J. Duncanson

GERALD CANNON HICKEY

Sons of the Mountains: Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954  
488pp, Yale University Press, £31.50.  
0 300 02453 3

During the Vietnam wars, it has been easy to overlook the fact that a third of Cambodia, two-thirds of Vietnam and four-fifths of Laos are inhabited by ethnic minorities mobilized, and sometimes blown up, by the contestants for power but never consulted about the issues at stake. Ho Chi Minh's first national liberation force consisted predominantly of tribesmen from the uplands bordering China. Gerald Cannon Hickey is the leading American anthropologist in the field of Vietnamese studies. He is best known for his work on the South Vietnamese themselves, but he has also spent nine years among the unlettered hill peoples of central Vietnam - the Rhade and Jarai, the Bahnar, Sedang and others. *Sons of the Mountains* is an attempt to provide them with a history in keeping with the national aspirations, the development during four decades of warfare.

The hill peoples inhabit a world of jungle, slash-and-burn tillage, long houses on stilts, inheritance through women, shamanism (all male), elders called "father of" instead of "son of" and - despite homogeneous material culture - widely differing language groups, members of which readily learn the tongue of neighbours but no less readily raid and enslave one another. The Chinese knew about these peoples 1,500 years ago; and medieval Chams and Khmers (Angkor) came up from the

represented in the region - which might be thought of as beneficent dragons - were not yet present.

Since so many of the principals in the Indochina drama were still off-stage, the French retained a lead role; the descriptions given by Lewis of his encounters with them are perceptive and illuminating. He brings out well the wry intelligence with which most of them assessed the situation and the prospects; the fundamental impossibility of their position; and the reasons why they, like other westerners after them, found elements of paradise in their exotic environment, even though it was clear that chaos was imminent. Despite the great differences of attitude between the French and the Americans, there are many scenes in which only a small effort of the imagination is needed to substitute the latter. Lewis was taken by some Frenchmen west from Saigon to Tay-Ninh, the headquarters of the strange Cao-Daist religion in which Victor Hugo is one of the principal saints. The road was punctuated by watch-towers, and he was told that control of the area passed to the Viet-Minh by night. In the 1970s the towers were still there and the commentary was almost identical; but the Americans rather than the French

were now the power behind the scene during daylight.

Lewis dramatically describes some fleeting contacts with the Viet-Minh - a forlorn hope on a miniature scale of a pattern which was to become highly familiar. The careful selection of such Viet-Minh (or, in Laos, Pathet Lao) as were allowed to parley with the outside world, the stage management of the encounters and the banal content of the conversations which resulted were all to become standard practice. A visit to Angkor Wat is conveyed in a fine piece of writing, studded with glittering descriptions and bizarre anecdotes; but it was written at a time when such a visit could be made with relative ease, and in ignorance of the impending disappearance from the tourist map of what had long been the single greatest sight of the region.

The ethnic composition of Indochina is a confusing one, partly because there are dozens of small, distinct ethnic groups which may comprise only a few thousand people each, and partly because one major group, the Lao, spills over into both China and Thailand. Indeed, even before the recent exodus of refugees, there were far more Lao outside Laos than within the country. Despite their failure to accommodate themselves to national

boundaries and other constraints of modern life - or perhaps because of this failure - the Lao have generally been regarded as the most amiable of the Indochinese. Lewis is among their admirers and gives an excellent, although slightly idealized, account of their social structure and traditional way of life. He remarks that: "The accumulation of wealth which is not to be used for definite, approved purposes, causes a man to lose prestige among his neighbours, just as in the West the process is reversed. The main difference seems, between Buddhism in Indochina, and Christianity - apart from any question as to their relative merits - is that, whether we admire it or not, the former is largely put into practice."

It was not uncommon in Laos to find westerners who had been there for years saying that they understood the Lao less and less as time passed, or more precisely that they realized more and more how much there was that they never had understood and never would understand. Had Lewis spent an entire year in the region he might have had less to tell us. But *A Dragon Apparent* would have gained in one respect; the full importance of the seasons and the annual cycle of festivals and ceremonies (which in Laos used to include not only pigroque races and rocket competitions but also a sermon to the Royal elephants) would have emerged more clearly.

However, even this is not overlooked. Quotations from the works of earlier travellers in Indochina are used to good effect, and the book as a whole is a shining example of how a novel writer can increase, by study of other people's works, the illuminating effect of his own writing without detracting from the freshness of his immediate impressions. Only when writing about food and eating habits is Lewis occasionally perfunctory or casual. But that is a field in which very little of any use had been written previously, and which he has to say about the hospitality given to him by, for example, the "lost tribes" of the Moir, has definitely made. Indeed, he shows himself fully aware throughout the book of the opportunities which he had to record vanishing customs. For this and for many other reasons, not least the pleasure afforded by the artistry and craftsmanship of his writing, Eland Books deserve a Garland of coriander and a toast in *"Mekong whisky"* for republishing *A Dragon Apparent*.

French academic literature provides Hickey with sources for the past, and his own field-work furnishes information for the 1950s. Notes on these various sources take up much of the text, but there is too great a reliance on points of trifling detail. Hickey makes frequent reference to the cross-tribal ramifications of chiefly families, but devotes only one page to everyday kinship and marriage ties. Moreover, there is no direct observation of shamans at work; instead, the author relies on French accounts not related to the wider anthropology on the subject. The omission is unfortunate because of the political importance, past if not present, of the *savets* of the Jarai, which he acknowledges. These three Kings of Fire, Water and Wind were (and are?), he says, "special shamans", yet he does not pause to speculate what singled them out from

the hill peoples inhabit a world of jungle, slash-and-burn tillage, long houses on stilts, inheritance through women, shamanism (all male), elders called "father of" instead of "son of" and - despite homogeneous material culture - widely differing language groups, members of which readily learn the tongue of neighbours but no less readily raid and enslave one another. The Chinese knew about these peoples 1,500 years ago; and medieval Chams and Khmers (Angkor) came up from the

represented in the region - which might be thought of as beneficent dragons - were not yet present.

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# Particular versus general

John Keegan

JOHN SWEETMAN

**Operation Chastise: The Dams Raid**  
— Epic or Myth  
218pp. Jane's. £9.95.  
0 7106 01 247

The near disappearance of the historical monograph is one of the most regrettable effects of the economic recession on English publishing. Even the university presses, which in the past held the publication of 'specialized' works of scholarship a duty, must now often explain to authors that the most original and high-quality work that the attendant costs of printing and circulation make its publication uneconomic.

It is a particular pleasure, therefore, to welcome the appearance of a monograph of traditional quality, exhaustively researched, painstakingly organized and written with incisive clarity. Jane's are to be congratulated on its appearance, all the more so because the form is for them a new departure. But the greater credit belongs, of course, to the author, who has clearly invested time and loving care on his manuscript.

The subject, moreover, is a good one: the legendary exploit of the Dam Busters — otherwise 617 Squadron of RAF Bomber Command, led by Guy Gibson, VC — in attacking and destroying the Möhne and Eder dams on May 17, 1943. Those dams, restraining reservoirs fed by the Ruhr river, contributed heavily to the electricity supply of the steel and engineering industries of the Ruhr valley. It had been recognized before the war by the RAF that the destruction of the dams would be an appropriate and rewarding mission for Bomber Command, and the Bombing Committee had examined the feasibility of the task as early as 1938.

It had then been judged, however, that the dams would resist attack by the means available and, although a great deal of thought was subsequently given to the improvisation of a special dam-busting weapon to do the job, none of the schemes proposed succeeded in overcoming service doubts. But at the end of 1941 a new and powerful mind was applied to the project. It belonged to Barnes Wallis, assistant chief designer of Vickers Armstrong, a firm whose close association with the RAF made it virtually a branch of the service procurement agency. Barnes Wallis was an extraordinary man. A brilliant engineer, he was also a patriot of almost mystical intensity who had devoted his talents to the maintenance of British greatness in the field of technology with a single-mindedness which, a hundred years before, would have won him a place in Samuel Smiles's *Lives of the Engineers*, that pantheon of Victorian practical greatness.

Wallis, indeed, may have achieved a certain literary immortality, since it seems altogether possible that he provided Nevill Shute, his junior on the design staff of the Airship R100, with a model for the technocratic heroes of his immensely popular novels of the 1940s and 1950s. Wallis lacked the infantile dottiness of the central figure of *No Highway*; but he had the same obsessiveness, once possessed by a subject, and the same ethereal charm. It was that, perhaps, as much as his intellectual power, which eventually allowed him to sell his solution of the dam-busting problem to authority, and see it through to its successful conclusion.

The author became a trusted friend of Wallis in his old age, and much of the material included here is taken from the Wallis papers. More important, its inner meaning is illuminated by John Sweetman's long conversations with their original author. But, even more fascinatingly, Sweetman's researches also brought him into contact with Sir Arthur Harris, AOC Bomber Command and a confirmed opponent of the sort of selective attack which Operation Chastise epitomized. Such was the confidence established between them that the air marshal, then a very old man indeed, was persuaded by the author to recount his frank opinion of the strategic bombing

campaign from a lecture platform; and extraordinarily interesting it was, too. Sir Arthur had diverged, it was made clear, not one jot from the position he had held — and implemented to the fullness of his powers — during the war. He still believed that bombing had made a greater contribution than any other method of war to victory over Germany; and furthermore that it was the area bombing and not the point bombing technique which had done the damage.

It says much for Sweetman's subtlety and sensitivity that he was able to use, as open and willing sources, the holders of such diametrically opposed views. But manage it he did, and without compromising the trust given him by either when it came to constructing the book's argument. His sympathies are clearly with Wallis rather than Harris, but he allows the evidence to make the case, not any expressed opinions of his own. And extremely compelling the evidence is. "This is tripe of the wildest description," the air marshal is found writing on the tentative plans in February 1943. "There is not the smallest chance of it working.... At all costs stop them putting aside Lancasters and reducing our bombing effort on this wild goose chase.... The war will be over before it works — and it never will."

One may sympathize with Harris's technical opinions — if not with his bombing philosophy. For the Wallis "store" — it was too ungainly to be called a bomb — belonged in appearance to the fantasy world of the amiable lunatic who, at Basil Seal's instigation, blows up the Chaplain-General in *Put Out More Fuses*. Modelled on the lines of a large beer-keg — in an early version it was actually encased in barrel staves — it was suspended beneath a Lancaster, from which ran a flexible belt linked to a hydraulic motor. As the bomber approached the target, the motor was switched on, so that when the weapon left the aircraft it was rotating backwards around its axis at 500 rpm.

## Air versus land

Brian Bond

MICHAEL DONNE and CYNTHIA FOWLER

**Per Ardua Ad Astra: Seventy Years of the RFC and the RAF**  
191pp. Muller. £12.95.  
0 584 11022 7

VICTOR GODDARD

**Skies to Dunkirk: A Personal Memoir**  
269pp. William Kimber. £9.95.  
0 7183 0498 5

Although the Royal Air Force's official date of birth is April 1, 1918, the Royal Flying Corps was formally constituted six years earlier. *Per Ardua Ad Astra* is essentially a superb photographic record — including some colour plates commemorating the seventieth anniversary of British air services. The illustrations range from pre-1914 balloons and airships at Farnborough to the latest Tiger Cat missiles, Wessex helicopters and Jaguar aircraft. The text provides an excellent concise history of aircraft development and the achievements of such legendary figures as "Colonel" Cody, A.V. Roe, de Havilland, Rolls, Mitchell and Camm. The pioneering era of the inter-war years with the Heaton Air Displays, the Schneider Trophy races and Imperial policing in the Middle East and India are nostalgically evoked. Beyond the remark that they are "controversial", there is no criticism of Trenchard's strategic bombing doctrine or Harris's bombing campaign: both are heroes in this celebration. A few paragraphs might have been spared, however, for the early social history of the Royal Air Force, a new Service with a romantic and technically progressive image yet retaining some of the older Services' unattractive features. "T. E. Lawrence's narrowing account of life in the ranks in the 1920s, *The Mint*, is not listed in the bibliography.

That ensured (television devotees of snooker will understand why) that when the weapon hit the inside face of the dam it would "crawl" down to a suitable depth before pressure fuses exploded the charge. The charge was enormous — three tons — because the dam walls were immensely thick; it had to be exploded low down so that the enveloping water would contain its force.

Derided by Harris at every stage of development, the weapon nevertheless engaged the interest of the Chief of the Air Staff, Portal, whose consistent support saw the Wallis programme through to its conclusion. That support secured the formation of a special squadron, 617, to drop the bomb, and the facilities for its pilot to train in the low-flying technique required.

When the night of the attack came, the squadron flew in three waves, to attack not only the Möhne and Eder, which were breached, but also the Sorpe, Ennepe, Lister and Diemel, which were not. Darkness and mist made the targets difficult to identify from the air, and the surrounding landscape imposed tortuous flight-paths on the pilots. Several of the aircraft had to make repeated passes until their bomb aimers were satisfied that they were on target; two of those which attacked the Sorpe made six and ten passes respectively; and even then the weapons caused no more than crumbling on the dam's crest.

But the breaches of the Möhne and Eder were enough to satisfy Wallis's backers in the RAF, and to provide the Ministry of Information with material for a spectacular headline and dramatic photographs as convincing evidence of Operation Chastise's success. What exactly that success amounted to in material terms forms the subject of enquiry of Sweetman's concluding chapters. After so much preliminary work, it is not surprising that he feels bound to make out the best case for the operation that he can. But, for all the statistics of direct and indirect damage that he assembles, one gains the

impression that his heart is not really in it. For the truth is that the breaching of the dams, though it drowned many hundreds of Germans and inevitably — for this was the Germany of the *Fremdarbeiter* — many foreign workers accommodated in barracks on the Ruhr valley floor, it did not seriously reduce the flow of power to the armaments factories. Such breaks as it did achieve were swiftly made good by switching the grid to alternative sources.

So we are left with the controversy with which the study opened: point or area bombing? It is altogether understandable that a technocrat of the Wallis sort, trained to comprehend the inner nature of structures before seeking to alter them, should have been affronted by the Harris idea of bombing first and seeing what happened afterwards. "Warfare is dependent upon industry," Wallis had written when he first began to expound his theory. "Industry is dependent upon power.... Power is dependent upon natural stores of energy.... If their destruction or paralysis can be accomplished THEY OFFER A MEANS OF RENDERING THE ENEMY UTTERLY INCAPABLE."

He was right, of course. But Harris, who depended upon voice power rather than capitals to make his arguments stick, knew that while the theory was exact, his Bomber Command's practice was not. In 1941 it had lost more aircraft over Germany than it had killed German civilians as well as military. He had stopped that by massing his bombers, keeping them away from point targets and ordering them simply to open their bomb-doors over cities rather than look for the railway stations, factories or whatever within. The effect of these raids was still difficult to demonstrate, but they did knock over German bricks and mortar rather than plough the countryside. And, while losses remained high, they were proportionately many fewer than in preceding years. No wonder that he should have

been so confident. The standards of success ensured that only the best were taken. And that consideration prompts the feeling that a strategy which killed the brightest on one's own side and civilians indiscriminately on the other must have had something wrong with it. Had such a stark premonition of results confronted "Bomber" Harris he would no doubt have clenched his teeth yet more firmly and pressed forward; with Wallis, the effect would surely have been different. He would have set out to design a weapon which carried no crew and could land within feet of its target after thousands of miles. He might have called it an intercontinental ballistic missile.

At the start of the battle of France Goddard exchanged administrative for operational responsibilities, but within a week heavy losses and shortage of petrol rendered him little more than a frustrated spectator as the surviving aircraft were removed to south-eastern England. There are interesting eyewitness accounts of Gort and his senior staff officers bearing up calmly under stress as GHQ was moved from one location to another. Finally Goddard made a hair-raising escape by air over the inferno of Dunkirk on May 26, and on the following day managed to convey in person to the Chiefs of Staff Gort's plea for a greatly increased naval effort in the evacuation of troops from the Dunkirk beaches.

These interesting recollections of the Allied collapse in France from the unusual standpoint of a senior air officer suffer from two defects. Stylistically the book falls between the two stools of a terse contemporary diary and later reflections which take account of subsequent scholarship. It also suffers from excessive striving for effect, purple passages and prolix musings which are the product of the armchair rather than the battlefield. Tanks are referred to as "steel-cased steeds", and describing a Messerschmitt attack Sir Victor writes "So, over those galleys and his thousand Bentleys galloped and thundered, beating the air while our hearts within us went beating on faster than his wheels." During the escape flight he reflects there might be a "plunging through the leaden and creaggy crust of a dark and deserted sea".

More seriously, several of the accompanying historical references are misleading or questionable. Sir Victor implies, for example, that Hitler would not attack in the West until certain that French morale was undermined, yet we know that, on the contrary, he repeatedly urged his reluctant generals to launch the invasion from October 1939 onwards only to be frustrated by adverse weather. He also believes, contrary to the scepticism of most historians, that fifth columnist were

ubiquitous and so influential that even minor headquarters would be betrayed and bombed within days. Doubtless this was suspected at the time, but was it true? He mentions that, shortly before his resignation from the premiership, Chamberlain begged Trenchard to assume control of all of the British forces, but the latter declined and retorted that what was needed was a new Prime Minister. This is inherently improbable and certainly requires supporting evidence. Sir Victor had spoken to Admiral Keyes when he visited GHQ as an emissary of King Leopold a few days before the latter surrendered in the role of Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army. Sir Victor pays tribute to the Belgian Army's achievement in shielding the retreating BEF, and rightly deplores the way in which Leopold was subsequently treated as a scapegoat because he refused to accept blame in London and instead became a German prisoner. He is out of touch, however, in claiming that historians have not viewed Leopold's agonizing decision sympathetically. "Telford" Taylor, Eleanor Gates and the present reviewer have done so, to name but three. Finally, the author seems to be under the erroneous impression that British units supplied the rearguard at Dunkirk until the last ships left early on June 4. Churchill had indeed been as much in a gallant gesture, but a result of what is most charitably interpreted as a misunderstanding was not fulfilled. Despite the above reservations, these recollections are worthwhile reading for anyone who wishes to understand just how badly Britain was prepared for Army-Air cooperation in 1940.

C. R. M. F. Cruttwell's *A History of the Great War 1914-1918*, first published by Oxford University Press in 1934, reprinted in 1936 with minor corrections and the addition of a new preface, is a valuable historical work. It is a pity that the book is now out of print, as it is a valuable historical work. It is a pity that the book is now out of print, as it is a valuable historical work.

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RELIGION

## Authenticating the authoritative

Hyam Maccoby

JACOB NEUSNER

**Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah**  
419pp. University of Chicago Press.  
\$25.  
0 226 57617 5

For the last decade, Jacob Neusner has been engaged in a project by which he aims to revolutionize the study of Rabbinic literature. He has not been the first, of course, to claim scientific status for work on Rabbinic subjects, but he argues that there was a fundamental flaw in the previous methodology. Earlier scholars, while admitting that this or that story or saying was apocryphal, persisted in regarding the main concepts of Judaism as forming a static, monolithic structure over a very long period. Ideas taken from late Midrashim of the fifth century onwards were used to characterize the Judaism of the first century. The cardinal methodological error, then, was to arrange the material under various "concepts" (theological or ethical) which were supposed to have been characteristic of Rabbinic Judaism from its inception. This was

the method of George Foot Moore, Max Kadushin, Ephraim Urbach and recently of E. P. Sanders, and it led, Neusner urged, to harmonizing interpretations, rather than to distinctions necessary between widely different sources and epochs.

Neusner thus introduced a new way of working. Rejecting all "concepts" as too abstract and as reflecting the preconceptions of the investigator, he proposed to follow the development of much smaller units of thought in the area of law, or *halakha*. By an atomistic method, involving the tracing of "attestations", and study of forms and mnemonic patterns, information would gradually build up from which an overall picture of the changing generations could be obtained. This method is necessarily very diffuse, and Neusner (with some help from his ex-students) has produced no less than 43 volumes on the Mishnah alone. The present volume is a summary of the results claimed.

Neusner's methods are undoubtedly useful within a limited sphere. They can be seen at their best (because at their most unassuming) in the work of his students. Neusner's scepticism about attributions can be a useful corrective to gullibility. The method of "attestation" or "verification", by which certain sayings can be

authenticated, is a useful tool; but it needs to be emphasized that a large number of sayings that cannot be "verified" in this way are not thereby proved spurious. In very many cases, the only real outcome of the Neusnerian methods of enquiry is, "No conclusion can be reached by this route."

It must be very frustrating to come to such a conclusion at the end of long investigations which were probably as boring to write as they are to read. There is thus a strong temptation, to which Neusner himself has succumbed unfortunately often, to avoid an acknowledgment of the meagreness of the results by leaping to unjustified and speculative conclusions. The type of reasoning most often involved might be called the "Pass-the-Mustard Fallacy". A biographer who comes to the conclusion that the only thing he can establish with full certainty is that his subject once said, "Pass the mustard", may well be tempted to write a biography in which this saying is treated as the most significant event in his subject's life. Similarly (to give the prime example), Neusner, having reduced the available data about the Pharisees to a few scraps mainly about ritual purity, builds a picture of them as a small, unaffiliated, apolitical group interested only in conducting "table-

fellowships" for the observance of ritual purity and tithing. By an interesting coincidence (paralleled in other areas of Neusner's work), this view of the Pharisees is the same as that of certain nineteenth-century Christian scholars anxious to support one aspect of the Gospel attack on the Pharisees. Neusner, however, claims that he has provided a scientific basis for what was previously only a polemical hypothesis, by his method of reducing the data by "verification". Contrary data, such as Hillel's famous and socially significant *probol*, are rejected as "unverified". If it be objected that the attribution of this edict to Hillel, though "unverified", may nevertheless be correct and possibly verifiable by other means, Neusner replies that this cannot be so, since the leader of so retiring and apolitical a group as the Pharisees cannot have promulgated such a socially significant decree. A better example of circular reasoning would be hard to find.

Since Neusner's picture of the Pharisees is contradicted by evidence from Josephus and certain parts of the New Testament which portray the Pharisees as highly influential both socially and politically, Neusner is forced to fabricate supplementary theories, reminiscent of Prolemaic epicycles, eg that Josephus was working hand in glove with the rabbis to falsify history. That the Pharisees were identical with the "table-fellowships" was never a plausible view (the New Testament does not even mention the "table-fellowships"), and it has been rendered even less so by recent research, which has tended to show that the "table-fellowships" comprised a small guild of liturgical collectors, who preserved ritual purity because of the holiness of the tithes with which they were in constant contact.

Neusner's methods thus reduce the data available for generalizing to such paucity that the gap cannot be bridged. He is thus left with a very narrow, criteria in narrowing down the "facts" lead to over-learned criteria, at a later stage, in interpreting the impoverished data, a common syndrome in the kind of "inductivism" so acutely criticized by Karl Popper. Neusner's work, then, presents a curious mixture of dry-as-dust fact-gathering and, at intervals, uncontrolled speculation, in which no methodology is discernible at all. Indeed, he has a definite penchant for unfounded speculation, as in his theory that the rabbis regarded ritual purity as a "viscous (*sic*) gas", or in his tortuous and illogical treatment of Jesus' simple injunction to "clean the inside of the cup".

These wastes of aridity are the outcome of Neusner's self-denying ordinance against consideration of theological or ethical "concepts". That the rabbis who produced the Mishnah were in no way inspired by biblical ideals of justice or compassion, or by concepts of covenant, grace, salvation, free will or love, is about the most unlikely hypothesis ever constructed, yet this is the *reductio ad absurdum* to which Neusner's methods lead, and which is embodied in the present book. The ethical and theological tractate *Avot*, which forms part of the Mishnah,

is ignored as a late, synchronizing addition, as are the various incidental passages in the Mishnah which do pronounce on theological or ethical matters. The only general aim attributed to the Mishnaic circle is a desire for orderliness, a concept endorsed by Neusner with fashionable structuralism, and with some paths from the circumstances of disaster after the destruction of the Temple. Even the Mishnaic laws of charity are attributed merely to a desire for orderliness, not for justice or mercy. But orderliness is a concept nowhere praised in the Rabbinic writings; it is an emanation of Neusner's method, not of his sources.

That the theological and ethical concepts of Judaism were not static must be granted. But to grant this is not to oblige us to regard the various movements, trends and epochs of Judaism as wholly disconnected. Neusner's methods presuppose the kind of results which he eventually produces: ie, by working with isolated units, he necessarily misses all the underlying unity or unitary development in the literature as a whole. Because the Mishnah is primarily a legal text-book, Neusner assumes that it emanates from a circle that was interested in legal topics only. Because the Mishnah contains nothing of a contemporary political nature, Neusner concludes that it comes from a circle that had withdrawn from contemporary politics. Yet we know from other sources that figures prominent in the Mishnah were active in politics.

It has been characteristic of Judaism in all epochs to strive for synthesis between different psychological and religious tendencies. To postulate a separate, isolated group for every document is to ignore the fact that mysticism, legalism, political activism and theological or ethical meditation can all coexist in Judaism in the same person, as even the same person, eg, example, the famous Neusner, methodological dogmatism work against the perception of unity is his treatment of the famous Mishnah story about the charismatic, Honi the Circle-maker. He treats this story merely as an expression of the dislike of the Mishnaic legalists for a charismatic. This is to ignore the admiration for Honi which is also part of the story, and Neusner even manages to miss completely the story's legal reason *d'fidei*, which is to adduce the authority of Honi, the charismatic, for a legal point (that one should not pray for the cessation of non-harmful rain). The Mishnah's attitude towards the charismatic is thus far more complex than Neusner realizes, and there is a fundamental unity between legalists and charismatics to which he is blind.

To attempt a characterization of Judaism without reference to organic "concepts" uniting various generations and tendencies is thus a barren endeavour. While acknowledgement should be given to Jacob Neusner for the introduction of useful, though limited, new methods of textual study, the deeper approach of Moore, Kadushin, Urbach and Sanders remains indispensable.

## LIKE BLACK SWANS

SOME PEOPLE AND THEMES

BROCARD SEWELL

with an Introduction by Colin Wilson

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## On ecumenical business

Peter Hebblethwaite

MICHAEL RICHARDS

**The Church 2001**  
Edited by Peter Jennings  
320pp. Slough: St Paul Publications.  
£10.  
0 8539 202 5

*The Church 2001* consists of eighty-five pieces published, mostly in the *Clergy Review*, between 1966 and 1981. Fr Michael Richards became that periodical's Editor in December 1967. From the start he laboured under a triple handicap.

First, he succeeded Fr Charles Davis, who announced that he was "leaving the Church". Clearly the demands of the age (or of Cardinal Heenan) on Richards were for soundness rather than sparkle. The second handicap was the title of the magazine: no matter what it actually contained, a monthly called the *Clergy Review* was likely to be regarded as an untimely professional journal. The third handicap was the English Roman Catholic diocesan clergy. According to Richards, who is one of them, they are "sober and practical". "They are not given to chasing after new ideas and they are critical of new developments which savour too much of the ivory tower and the study." That is meant, I believe, as praise. It confirms the image which many English diocesan priests have of themselves. While lumped-up theologians like Hans King are wrecking the Church, they are "getting on with the job" in Bootle and Brighton.

In fifteen years, Richards has overcome these handicaps, and is still in the saddle. He dealt with the problem of succeeding Davids by being optimistic himself: a convert from Evangelical Anglicanism with a knowledge of history and a theology degree from the Institut Catholique in Paris. He did not foolishly try to emulate his predecessor. He found his own tone of voice — grave, not suffering fools gladly, occasionally witty, always very English.

Richards resisted the temptation to change the title of the *Clergy Review*. Instead he tried to broaden its appeal and redefine "clergy". In an editorial called "For Clergy", read "Laity", he endeavoured to show that clergy in the New Testament means simply a "portion" of the Church and is not narrowed down to the "ordained ministry". Though technically correct, the interpretation is unlikely to reverse the linguistic habits of centuries. It can be said, however, that the clergy/laity distinction is less strong than it was, and that there is a keener sense of their correlation: they need each other.

The anti-intellectual character of the English diocesan clergy posed a stiffer problem. It is difficult to persuade people to read anything at all if they prefer to be "getting on with the job" (in the case of convert clergymen). He links this requirement with the ecumenical movement: "If we are not going to accept married men into the ministry, then we might as well abandon our ecumenical struggles" (the means effects).

But — and this is the second novelty — Richards's ecumenical commitment has not blinded him to the ambiguities of the three — now four — agreements that have been reached with the Anglican Communion. He describes the distinction made in the ARCIC reports between the "actual Church" and the "ideal Church" as "one of the oldest blunders in the ecumenical business".

Fr Richards is not above blowing a few blasts on the old Roman Catholic trumpet. In January 1980, he made the following astonishing claim: "The security, justice and peace of the English people will come to depend on the strength, dedication and service of the Catholic community and cannot be sought anywhere else." The crowded cathedrals, involvement in university life, the range of newspapers and reviews, the warm relations between laity and clergy are cited as evidence. Every parish should have its banner, he muses. England is now, he says, post-imperialist, post-Victorian public school, post-Protestant. Hence his provocative title: "England is a Catholic Country". One can understand that he should be particularly distressed by the fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury conducts his correspondence with Cardinal Hume through Lambeth's Foreign Relations department.

Fr Richards reports that an "emancipated sister" once said to him: "I don't propose to come to your lectures. Father; you only give us the party line." Well yes, and no.

Edited by Peter Moore, the Dean of St Albans, *Bishops, But What Kind?* (176pp. SPCK. £4.95. 0 281 03860 0) brings together a dozen prescriptions for the role of the bishop in the churches of today. The contributors include theologians of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, United Reformed and Coptic persuasions, and also representatives of practical/episcopal experience in the Third World, in the persons of Leslie Brown and Leslie Newbigh. There is a certain unanimity of view on future policy, summed up in the wish to see "one bishop, one flock" in a given area. Apart from its notably wide ecumenical range, the book breaks little new ground, and a number of the essays cover the same material.

On two points Richards departs from predictability. He is in favour of priestly celibacy being optional and of

John Keegan



## Vox-Pop

### Frank Tuohy

#### CHRISTY BROWN

##### A Promising Career

248pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.50.  
0 436 07097 9

Christy Brown, who first came to general notice with the publication of *Damn all the Days*, died a year ago. His last novel, *A Promising Career*, is the first of his books to be set outside his native Ireland and it deals, though at some remove, with the world of pop singers in Britain.

The career in question is that of a young singer, Janice, and perhaps also of her talented song-writer husband. Art, who accompanies her singing on the guitar. The ups and downs of their marriage are contrasted with the general moral decline of their agent, Simon Sandford, a rich man with peculiar tastes, who neglects his dying wife and goes in for sadomasochistic relationships — first with a black South African girl and later with the family au pair, a Wagnerian German lady who finally takes him over and fulfils his fantasies.

Christy Brown's early writing triumphed over devastating physical disability and an impoverished background. He was fortunate only in that the moral traditions of Catholic Dublin provided him with twenty-two siblings who helped him to survive. In addition, as a native Irishman, he had the ability to translate into coherent and rhythmic prose some of the untiringly fluent speech — that sense of talking your way into life — which was part of the surrounding scene. His later separation from this source was perhaps inevitable, but the abandonment of whatever experience, even indirect, that it gave him proves in the event to have been disastrously mistaken.

Nowadays aspiring writers often show competence coupled with an impression of complete falsity, which is quite different from the lapses into cliché or melodrama which on occasion afflicted even the most distinguished writers of the past. Long scenes are presented in which nothing comes to life, in which zombie-like characters exchange unnaturally informative dialogue. The influence comes from television. Throughout *A Promising Career* it is pervasive, in spite of the impressively elaborate surface of the prose. Only romantic fiction of the Carland-Mills & Boon type works by impression: other popular writers get their effects by knowingness — hence the "researched" novel with its flaunted expertise. But *A Promising Career* offers no information about contracts or recording sessions. Everything is vague, with the possible exception of the sexual encounters.

Pornographic fiction seems to demand parody, and a number of humorous writers have taken shots at it. I wanted to believe that this was what was happening here, but the stylistic connections with the rest of the novel forbid such an interpretation. The prose style goes over the top early on, and it remains there.

What we have, then, is a literary curiosity, one which is the result of a talent moving blindly in the wrong direction — a work, in short, that can only do damage to the reputation created by Christy Brown's earlier books. The Irish literary tradition is a fairly strong one, but the antecedents of *A Promising Career* are not to be found there. I was reminded, however, of another figure, indubitably Irish but too often forgotten. Perhaps the works of Mrs. Amrita Rao, the post-mistress of Larnie, author of *Freem Idleness* and *Poems of Puncture*, should be revived as a warning for every new literary generation.

## The pre-nuptial small print

### Linda Taylor

#### BARBARA HOWELL

##### A Mere Formality

267pp. Hodder & Stoughton. £7.95.  
0 340 28375 0

In a feminist climate where men and women are supposedly equal, a pre-nuptial agreement is a reasonable and necessary prerequisite for marriage. "Everyone," Cynthia argues with herself, "was drawing up marriage contracts lately and she had no grounds for wanting to be different." Why, after all, should a man be required to pay for a woman divorcing him? Cynthia reads the small print: "The terms were clear (and reasonable?): if she divorced him, she got nothing. If she stayed until he died, she would be a very rich woman." Fat, slippery Clay, Cynthia's elderly boyfriend (he's in his fifties, she's thirty-eight), had already been stung — badly, his first wife, Marion, had received an excessively large settlement on the break-up of their marriage, and had then proceeded to marry the even richer Hank, executive of Bellamy Plastics, Florida. Clay had no intention of repeating his ignominious experience but he did want Cynthia. The agreement was "a mere formality".

In Barbara Howell's first novel, set on the East Coast of the United States (Welford, Long Island; Park Avenue, Manhattan; Boca Raton, Florida), feminism is less a climate than a faint lightning flash; the weather, according to Marion, is altogether patriarchal. Marion, the intellectual (she is, or was, writing a thesis on Camus), has it worked out in her note book: the hierarchical pattern is simple: "God-Nature; Man-Society; Woman-the Home." What she omits to tell us, and herself, is that God, among the million-

dollar deals of Florida and New York, is not the one who busies himself about the lilies of the field; he is Mammon. And to Mammon, male and female alike are bending the knee.

Cynthia, a divorced Welford shopkeeper, is lured, initially, not so much by Clay's wealth as by her trust in his love for her; like everybody else, she's lonely. The pre-nuptial agreement destroys her illusions; it was "a straightforward declaration of mistrust". Cynthia is corrupted; she turns from being a big-bosomed, comfortable (and sensual) homemaker into a vengeful spendthrift. Lavishly decked out in silk couture dresses, pink coat, gold and pearls, she spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on re-designing and decorating Clay's Manhattan apartment. Her daughter Beth, meanwhile, seduces Clay and proceeds to blackmail him.

Poor, innocent Clay, who "sincerely believed he was an easy man to live with", pours out his heart to a bereaved Marion (Hank has died of a brain tumour), and the would-be feminist tries to buy Cynthia off (\$750,000 to divorce Clay, so that she, Marion, can have him back). While Marion is turning her patriarchal theory on its head, however, Cynthia holds the trump card: she refuses the money, divorces Clay and liberates them all.

## Being a man

### T. O. Treadwell

#### WILLIAM HOFFMAN

##### The Land That Drank the Rain

245pp. Louisiana State University Press. £10.50.  
0 8071 1004 3

*The Land that Drank the Rain* is a novel about guilt and fear and the exorcising of these demons. It is an American novel, and the exorcism takes a romantic form which has always been powerfully attractive in the United States: the retirement to a life of isolation and self-sufficiency in the wilderness, and the achievement of wisdom and peace through submission to the rhythms of the natural world. William Hoffman understands the potency of this idea, but his novel is controlled by the awareness that the ideal is unrealizable and perhaps undesirable.

Clayton Carson is a rich Californian property developer, proud of his pioneer ancestors who made the great westward trek across mountain and desert in the hard days of the last century. As the book opens he has journeyed in the opposite direction, from a California grown prosperous and corrupt to the depressed and ruined coal country of the Cumberland Mountains in Eastern Kentucky, where he has bought a few acres of useless land high on the hillside. His first act on arriving is to burn his Cadillac and his credit cards so as to begin his new life unencumbered and clean.

Carson's wish is to isolate himself absolutely. He goes as infrequently as possible into the local town and when he does so he pretends to be a mute so as to avoid communication with the natives. He builds himself a house from stones taken from the stream that runs through his land and makes a garden from which to feed himself — the fascination of this kind of do-it-yourselfery is unfailing and Hoffman describes it very well.

Carson's reason for cutting himself off so absolutely from the rest of the world is made apparent gradually as the novel proceeds. We learn that he has been married to Bea, a domineering painter, and that during their sexual experiments Carson has discovered in himself strong impulses towards homosexuality and transvestism. He responds to this recognition of his own nature with deep disgust and a vivid sense of his own damnation; despair and shame drive him to self-exile in his mountain hermitage.

From the start, Carson's quest for absolute isolation is a failure. The town postmaster insists on delivering his

mail and overrides with indignation Carson's plea that he doesn't want it. The local bureaucracy takes an interest in him — the symbolic burning of his Cadillac results in the threat of a fine for car-dumping and he gets into difficulty over his property taxes. The most persistent disturber of Carson's solitude, though, is an eccentric and rootless young man who bears the bizarre but authentically hillbilly name Vestil Skank.

Desperate to escape the dull hopelessness of life in the mountains, Vestil bullies Carson and then seduces him, but Carson's feelings for the boy gradually turn from fear to interest and finally sympathy, and at the story's violent climax he undergoes the shame of publicly admitting his homosexuality, and the pain of a love wound, so as to make possible Vestil's escape. In so doing, he masters his own fear and is able to face a return to the world of men.

The real subject of *The Land that Drank the Rain* is manhood. The two important female characters, Carson's wife Bea and a local brothel keeper called Lily Lena, are both vampire figures, draining strength and life from the men they hold in thrall. Carson's mountain isolation is a retreat and a penance, but it is also a return to a way of life where male values are powerful and clear. "The first duty of man is to be a man," Carson says after a final victory over Bea, in the course of which he has frightened and humiliated her. "It's so simple and right. Men have to be men. If that's lost, there'll be no more places in the wilderness, and there are moments when the novel's misogyny becomes disturbing. Hoffman is aware, though, that what it means to be a man is not at all simple to determine, and this sense of ambiguity saves his story from sliding into the sexual tyranny that some of its attitudes imply.

The most successful thing about *The Land that Drank the Rain* (an annoyingly pretentious and irrelevant title) is its Appalachian setting. The misery and meanness of life in the mountains are excellently conveyed, particularly in a brilliant chapter describing the hysterical fervour of a backwoods prayer meeting. To these, salvation by living the life of nature in this environment is an enterprise little full of irony, and Hoffman manages his ironies with tact and skill.

A special "Grace Paley issue" of *Damn the review of the Centre D'Études de Recherches sur les écritures en français* (No 14, Mai 1982) contains an interview with Hoffman on her fiction, and a bibliography.

A second theme that appears in many of her articles is that all consumption has a social purpose. In discussing poverty in the Western world, she rightly rejects the idea that it depends merely on people having too little money to provide nourishment and accommodation adequate for their physical health. She also dismisses the idea that poverty is relative, since this fails to define the condition and implies that people feel poor merely because they see others as richer than themselves. Her own thesis is that

### SOCIAL STUDIES

#### MARY DOUGLAS

##### In the Active Voice

306pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £9.95.  
0 7100 9065 X

It is always of interest to peep over an academic fence and look at what is growing in the garden of a neighbouring discipline. Mary Douglas's garden is perhaps not typical of a social anthropologist's: it contains many exotic plants, some of which seem destined to die young, and it lacks two of the more common anthropological blooms — the study of kinship and political practice. She is best known for her work on pollution and taboo, but in recent years she has been influenced by sociologists and ethnomethodologists like Basil Bernstein and Harold Garfinkel.

In the *Active Voice* is a collection of miscellaneous articles, two of which first appeared in the *TLS*. They do not make easy reading, since Mary Douglas has a clumsy style and is given to inventing her own jargon as she goes along. In so far as they have any common theme it is that in analysing culture one should take into account the intentions and aims of individuals and the strategies by which they achieve their goals. Mary Douglas maintains that the beliefs and habits of a given culture are neither determined by the material environment nor by blind chance, but are developed to serve the goals of that culture and in particular to promote the ways in which its members interact and are accountable to one another. One of her students once asked her whether recognizing that people were active agents actually helped to achieve a better analysis of culture or whether it just made her feel good. The question is a fair one, since, in practice, her insistence on human autonomy does not greatly affect her analysis of the different facets of culture. As she herself writes, "Paradoxically the task of explaining life upon the individual in sociological theory is to ignore what is peculiar to individuals and to attend to what is publicly shared and therefore accessible to sociological methods".

Her repeated pleas for taking account of human intentions become a little tiresome. In general, the more a non-scientific subject aspires to rigour, the more obsessed it becomes with method which social scientists, including Mary Douglas, call "methodology" in order to make it sound more grandiose — and the less emphasis it puts on substantive findings. Thus, her essay on the sociology of religion tells us little not already known and ends with the lame conclusion that she is putting forward "a programme for our times, both methodologically sophisticated and phenomenologically in its assumptions". She argues that the religious beliefs chosen by a society validate its actions and may help to alleviate the guilt of those who transgress its mores. Thus, the Tallensi, in whom respect for father and kin is a paramount virtue, believe in the existence of a Destiny present in everyone before birth. Anyone who does not show his father due respect is thought to have had a bad Destiny and hence is partially relieved of blame. When Mary Douglas applies the same kind of reasoning nearer home it becomes less plausible. She argues, for example, that Western society invented the concept of IQ "to justify our procedures of exclusion or promotion". But such tests are not used to justify some other procedure; they are used because they have little predictive power and they have little resemblance to the role played by belief in God or in Destiny.

A second theme that appears in many of her articles is that all consumption has a social purpose. In discussing poverty in the Western world, she rightly rejects the idea that it depends merely on people having too little money to provide nourishment and accommodation adequate for their physical health. She also dismisses the idea that poverty is relative, since this fails to define the condition and implies that people feel poor merely because they see others as richer than themselves. Her own thesis is that

everyone needs goods in order to facilitate interactions with others. "All consumption activity is a ritual presentation and sharing of goods classified as appropriate to particular social categories which themselves get defined and graded in the process." Although people in the West give and receive gifts, and although in their choice of clothes, food and drink, furniture, and pictures they may be making a statement about themselves, it is surely not true that all consumption is a social objective. There are some who buy flowers or books or records merely because they like them and not as a means of communicating with others. She claims that those economists who sneer at luxury goods are misguided because they ignore the social functions of goods, but there are surely better ways of communicating than by attempting to keep up with the Joneses. The main disappointment in her essay on poverty, however, is that having accused others of failing to define it, she herself provides no adequate definition or method of measurement.

It is an interesting thought that someone as poor who has sufficient resources to maintain his dignity, but dignity cannot be measured in pounds or dollars.

In an entertaining essay on food as a system of communication, the forbidding sub-heading "Methodological Problems" again appears. The problem of how to obtain accurate information on the eating habits of the British working class was solved by the rather obvious expedient of getting a student to become a lodger in four different households. He ate with the families and recorded, presumably in the privacy of his own room, the daily fare. With considerable resource, Mary Douglas was able to discern many repeating patterns in the system of meals. On Sundays, the main meal (A) was taken at 12.30, and consisted of a joint, potatoes, green vegetables and thick gravy, followed by pudding with custard or fruit salad with cream, and finishing with a hot drink and biscuits. A lesser meal (B) was eaten around 5.30 with fish or eggs or baked beans accompanied by bread, followed by bread and jam and sometimes by tea and biscuits. The last meal of the day comprised a cup of tea or cocoa and biscuits. In both meals A and B she claims that as the courses proceed, the visual pattern of the food on the plate becomes increasingly orderly, the courses move from savoury to sweet tastes, and they become progressively more desiccated, though it is unclear why she considers fruit salad and cream a drier dish than meat and potatoes. The same progression can be observed through a sequence of meals, though only at weekends since on week-days the order of meals A and B is reversed. Moreover, the meals that mark the major events of a lifetime start with the sweet Christening cake and end with the savoury funeral baked meats. She also claims that the staple item in each course of meals A and B is always accompanied by a dressing, more desiccated, and thus some of the householders under investigation apparently eschewed tea biscuits. She argues that for a meal to be seen as a meal it must conform to a set pattern and the pattern must differ between meals. For the latter reason, bread takes the place of potatoes in meal B. The reader may well be able to think of other reasons why bread should supplant potatoes — nobody wants to eat potatoes all the time let alone go to the trouble of peeling them twice a day. Apart from the fact that Mary Douglas disregards exceptions and forces some of the evidence to make it conform to the structure she wishes to impose, the meals eaten by the upper-middle classes have no such clear-cut pattern. Although they may start (and end) with either a sweet or savoury dish, they are still counted as meals.

Mary Douglas is conscious of the frivolity of her "analogy" since she remarks that they "may seem trivial to anyone who is not interested in problems of identity and analogy". Unfortunately, she disdains to define these problems let alone to inform her readers what new light her findings throw on them. Of more importance

## Interactive intentions

### Stuart Sutherland

since the proof of the pudding is in the eating, she fails to make explicit what it is that this "food system" communicates. She argues that the fact that the pattern of meals forms a single recognizable system explains the conservatism of the eating habits of the working classes, a claim that seems to put the tart before the main course. Curiously she does not make the point that if the formal meal symbolizes anything it is care for the family. The formal meal (particularly A) serves to bring the whole family together as a unit, though she does not reveal whether in the families that were observed, the children were forbidden to leave the table until the meal had ended. She believes that only by studying the structure of a given food system and its social significances will it be possible to bring about changes of nutritional benefit. She may well be right, but she does not adduce any instances where this has occurred. Instead she maintains that the reason why powdered potatoes have not replaced normal potatoes is that they do not fill the same role in the structure of a dinner: she might have added that they are extremely nasty.

The set-piece of the book is a lengthy essay on cultural bias, which offers a new "methodology" for analysing cultures and the place of individuals within a particular culture. Mary Douglas suggests that cultures should be classified on two axes. The first is the extent to which the individual is dependent on the group to which he belongs. In a strong group, for example, a commune, the group determines much of what the individual does and he may interact almost exclusively with members of the group. In a weak one, the individual is free to make his own decisions and to interact with whomsoever he chooses. For the second dimension of classification Mary Douglas uses the term "grid". In a strong grid the interactions of individuals with one another are regulated by the rules of the society. People are segregated by rank or status and accordingly they adopt different styles of clothing, food and housing. Different roles may be ascribed to men and women.

Mary Douglas attempts to predict how cultures at the four extremes of this two-way classification will behave. In the low-group low-grid community people are constrained neither by group nor grid and there will be extreme competition amongst individuals: each will judge others by the extent to which they are useful to himself. The entrepreneur is typical of such a culture. As so often, some of Mary Douglas's asides are more interesting than her main theme. Thus, she points out that if trade goes badly for some individuals in the low-group low-grid society, they may press for rules to govern trade and hence move towards a higher grid-point. Similarly the formation of price-cartsels represents a move towards stronger group influence. People in the low-group high-grid culture will be heavily constrained by their allotted station. The rules governing their lives are often made by others. This is the culture of the Victorian kitchen-maid. In the strong-group weak-grid society, such as a commune, there is likely to be conflict between individuals since in the absence of grid rules there is no easy way of resolving disputes. Finally, conditions in a high-group high-grid culture permit the formation of long-lasting stable groups, like the old-established family firm which supports its weaker male members and compels its women to ally themselves in marriage to men who will be useful.

Mary Douglas assigns a cluster of about ten characteristics to each of the four possible combinations of group and grid strength. Unfortunately, she provides no empirical evidence to show that the characteristics in each cluster are in fact found together. Instead, she goes on to apply her analysis with varying degrees of plausibility to a number of different areas of life, including attitudes to nature, foreigners, cookery, marriage, youth, the past, death, physical handicap and punishment. She maintains, for example, that the strong-group low-grid cultures will have clearly demarcated spatial boundaries not merely for the group as a whole but for individual houses, and within the houses for "bed, lavatories and

kitchen". She argues that only by demarcating units in this way can the individual "define himself as the unit of social intercourse". But many communes do not practise such a rigorous demarcation of space. She argues more plausibly that in the competitive low-group low-grid society there will be little deference to the old, who in order to compete more effectively may try to conceal their age. It is less obvious why in the high-group low-grid culture she expects deference to be paid to the old, although one might expect that in a coherent group they would be looked after. Here, as elsewhere, she seems more interested in putting forward highly speculative ideas than in demonstrating their validity. Her essay on culture would have been much more convincing had she been able to take three or four cultures of each combination of group and grid type and demonstrate that their attitudes actually do vary in the ways she posits.

Perhaps her most fanciful attempt to use group and grid is her application of these concepts to gardening. The low-group high-grid culture will have competitive gardens with "plants brought from afar, cherished skillfully to thrive in unwelcome climate". The hierarchical and compartmentalized nature of the high-group high-grid culture will manifest itself in topiaries and formal gardens containing "trees trained to weep or lepped to give light", while high-group low-grid people will for reasons not explained neglect their gardens. On the low-group high-grid gardening habits Mary Douglas for once admits herself defeated and offers no opinion.

How then does her own garden grow? It contains some carefully prepared beds with interesting-looking plants, but whether they will survive in the light of evidence is problematic. There are several blooms that look attractive from afar, but on closer inspection do not fulfil their promise. Finally, there is a surprising amount of rubbish, which the author has attempted to conceal behind impenetrable thickets of verbiage.

## Getting ground down

### Stephen Brook

#### CAROL ADAMS

##### Ordinary Lives: A Hundred Years Ago

228pp. Virago. £4.50.  
0 86068 239 0

*Ordinary Lives* purports to be a source book, intended primarily for school and university students, of material relating to late Victorian social history. There is, however, a polemical drive behind the book since Carol Adams (author of *The Gender Trap*) is principally concerned to show the changing, and unchanging, position of women in British society.

By an adroit combination of quotation, commentary, statistics, and illustration, Ms Adams gives a vivid and often stark picture of what it was like to be alive a hundred years ago. Although some of the chapters are sketchy and ragged, in particular those on growing up and education,

others present a lucid portrait of such issues as sex, health, and recreation, as they concerned people of all classes and both sexes. She is at pains to stress the vast gap between rich and poor, and one of the book's strengths is that everything is given its price. She not only provides tables setting out rates of pay, but also examples of how much it cost to make basic purchases — not just food and furniture, but such items as contraceptives, medical services, holidays, and bicycles. She shows that growing national prosperity and technological progress had little impact on working-class lives, since their benefits were beyond the reach of all but the middle and upper classes.

But although Ms Adams is much concerned with change, she says little about how and why change occurred. The national and political economy is scarcely referred to, and this means that much of the information floats in a historical vacuum. Each chapter ends with a list of questions for classroom use but it seems impossible to give satisfactory answers on the basis of the snippets from which this book is constructed.

## Crossing the Line

As your eyes become accustomed to darkness you see the slow, inevitable seepage through the badly caulked hull, a rat scurrying for safety among the massive trunks with their rusted locks and bleached addresses.

None of this might have been seen at all had the bells pealed just an hour earlier, calling you up on deck to take your watch among the razzmatazz of the unsavoury crew whose lives will never be the same again.

Charles Boyle

## Paperback fiction in brief

### Patricia Craig

#### WILLA CATHER

##### My Mortal Enemy

122pp. Virago. £2.50.  
0 86068 246 3

In this short novel, first published in 1926, Willa Cather empties her narrative of everything not essentially relevant to the story, an exercise in strict economy of content. The "story" — a romantic one, about an elopement and consequent disinheritance — is Myra Henshaw's, and it is told in the first person by a young girl who meets the central character only twice, but finds her understanding and perception enlarged by the encounters.

#### ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

##### The Leavenworth Case

331pp. Constable. £3.75.  
0 486 23865 2

*The Leavenworth Case* is one of the more celebrated curiosities of detective fiction: its early date (1878) makes it the first detective novel by a woman to be published in book form. Moreover it presents, albeit in a rudimentary way, a number of the features later associated with the genre: painstaking investigation, emphasis on clues ("I see a faint line of smut near one of the chambers"), an apparently unblemished hero (the New York Inspector Gryce), a little punster, and often unintentionally funny. It is nevertheless a good early example of the genre.

#### RADCLIFFE HALL

##### The Well of Loneliness

447pp. Virago. £3.50.  
0 86068 254 4

First published in 1928 and subsequently banned, *The Well of Loneliness* excited disapproval and interest for non-literary reason. It is of course the archetypal lesbian novel, the one whose title, at least, is familiar to everyone. It's the story of Stephen

Gordon who looks like a man when she wears a women's dress, and vice versa. She meets Stephen, has to contend with, though, is more than a problem of dressing. Homosexuality makes her very unhappy, and she suffers extravagantly and luridly. The book is all blighted amorosness and overwrought inversion. Fortunately the sub-genre it engendered often takes itself less seriously: we find Nancy Spain, for example, in 1949, mischievously commemorating Radcliffe Hall in the name of an imaginary girls' school — thus called, she assured her readers, "more for the red cliffs of clay upon which it was built than for any other reason".

#### EUDORA WELTY

##### The Robber Bridegroom

185pp. Virago. £2.95.  
0 86068 290 0

*The Robber Bridegroom* (first published in 1942) takes its material from the standard European fairy tale: heartless stepmother, hard tasks, hazardous journeys, talking heads, picturesque violence, good fortune, its heroine, Rosamond, is as incautious as Red Riding Hood, as lucky as Cinderella and as useful about the house as Snow White. Eudora Welty reassembles the traditional, rich ingredients in an American setting to make an original fantasy.

#### EUDORA WELTY

##### Delta Wedding

247pp. Virago. £2.95.  
0 86068 289 7

Like *The Robber Bridegroom* which preceded it, *Delta Wedding* (1945) is full of extraordinary vigour, charm and effervescence. A volatile family, in the grip of excitement over an approaching social event — the wedding of the seventeen-year-old daughter Dabney — is of the centre of the novel; the year is 1923 and the setting, as usual, the Mississippi delta. Eudora Welty deals with a succession of heightened moments without in the least producing an impression of surfeit.

#### NEIL JORDAN

##### The Post

223pp. Abacus. £2.50.  
0 349 11857 4

Neil Jordan's novel, told in the first person, concerns the narrator's attempt to piece together the facts of his mother's life — a matter of guesswork as well as fieldwork, like the stories he weaves around a couple of postcards of Cornwall, dated 1914. This is the year of his mother Rene's birth; her upbringing in Dublin, Bray and Sandymount is vague but intensely imagined, convent schooling and all. It's a romantic undertaking, artfully and gracefully executed.

#### E. ARNOT ROBERTSON

##### Four Frightened People

349pp. Virago. £3.50.  
0 86068 280 3

The four frightened people of E. Arnot Robertson's title (the novel, her third, first appeared in 1931) have plenty to contend with — but not plague behind them, the rigours of a Malaysian jungle before them. Their trials form a pretext for a certain amount of deep thinking, lush feeling, and not-too-resolute character analysis on the part of the author. The result is rather like a *Capitula* serial with hygienic-erotic overtones.

#### MARILYNNE ROBINSON

##### Housekeeping

187pp. Penguin. £2.25.  
0 14 00 60626

Marilynne Robinson's first novel, published by Faber last year and now available in a King Penguin edition, deals with the odd upbringing of two young sisters in a North American lakeside town. Ruth and Lucille Stone, after their mother's suicide, come into the care of an itinerant aunt who makes prodigious efforts to curb her instincts for vagrancy. Written in grave, lucid, unembellished prose, *Housekeeping* fits its disconcerting theme into an elegant framework.

She is so like



# The novelist as politician . . .

Rosemary Ashton

GRAHAM McMASTER  
Scott and Society  
253pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£19.50.  
0 521 23769 6

This is an uneasy book on a difficult subject. Much of Graham McMaster's argument proceeds by means of "correcting" current critical opinion of Scott. Thus he begins with the influential criticisms of Daiches and Lukács, who see an essential dualism in Scott, that of the bigoted Tory landowner and the sympathetic, even "reforming", social novelist. McMaster objects:

the theory of "Scott's dualism" seems very unconvincing also in the sort of model of humanity it proposes. Large parts of creative writing may spring from "the unconscious", but they must surely be assisted by – or not hindered by, at least – the conscious, organising mind; there must be a free flow of information between the active, social individual and the creative artist.

He proposes the alternative view that Scott's politics "had more sanity and centrality than they have usually been given credit for". But this is problematic. "Sanity" and "centrality" are unclear terms in this context. If political middle-of-the-roadism is meant, neither the evidence which McMaster brings from Scott's novels nor that adduced from the letters and journalism proves the case. If McMaster has something more abstract in mind – general philosophical reasonableness, for example – the case is once more difficult to prove, and McMaster certainly does not prove it. Indeed, he reprints in full the letter Scott wrote to the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* in September 1820, recanting at Ballantyne's editorial criticism of the magistrates' handling of Peterloo. But he relegates it to an appendix, denying himself the opportunity to analyse Scott's so-called "reasonable" abstract rhetoric, though he does note in passing that the rhetoric expresses "fantasies about atheist demagogues engaged in awful plots to subvert the

entire noble fabric of the constitution". When facing actual examples of Scott's political and social views, McMaster can be no more than uneasily positive:

As a politician, Scott was well-informed, consistent and sincere, even technically competent. I find much to admire in his courage in sticking to his faith in something as mundane and unspectacular as an income tax.

Indeed, he sometimes seems much closer to the Lukács view of Scott's dualism than he claims to be, as when he writes, of Scott on Peterloo:

He is anxious at all costs to justify the actions of the magistrates and condemn those of the populace (how unlike the author of *Guy Riddick* and *The Heart of Midlothian*) and to play down accounts of fatalities. There is none of Scott's customary prosaic attention to detail, especially of the economic background of discontent.

Where this book excels is in McMaster's intelligent handling of Scottish local history and the juxtaposing of contemporary reports on society in the Highlands and the Borders with Scott's portraits of these societies in the novels. A good example is his placing side by side quotations from J. Robertson's *General View of the Agriculture of Inverness* (1808), D. Stewart of Garth's *Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland* (1825), and Scott's *Culloden Papers* on the question of the supplanting of economically "useless" Highlanders by the rearing of sheep and cattle. "Romantic" sentiment and shrewd expediency combine in Scott and in other social observers, as McMaster shows:

Many others, of whom Scott was one, however much they believed in individualism and progress, found it hard to acquiesce in the dismissal of the clansmen as mere caterpillars of the commonwealth. This is why so much stress came to be placed on their martial spirit, for here was one area in which they were invariably useful.

"Does the state owe no paternal regard to these men? Is it not a debt of gratitude due by their country to cherish them? Is it not the soundest policy to nurse and rear that race of

people? Are all our wars at an end?" [Robertson]

"... [it cannot be] for the welfare of any state to deteriorate the character of, or wholly to extirpate, a brave, loyal and moral people – its best support in war." [Stewart]

"If the hour of need should come – and it may not perhaps be far distant the pibroch will remain unanswered." [Scott]

Undoubtedly a public relations exercise whose unwitting clients were the clansmen was just as much the *raison d'être* of the martial scenes in some of the Waverley novels as Scott's predilection for military fun and games.

McMaster also brings out interesting connections between Scott's representation of exceptional rural societies, such as that of the Zelanders in *The Pirate* and Wordsworth's portrayal of the Lake society in *Lyrical Ballads* and *The Prelude*.

On the novels themselves, McMaster is generally less convincing. This is partly the result of certain problems of method. First there is the question of readership and the knowledge the author may assume his readers to have. Scott presents a particular problem, since his position has changed from that of the much-read "Great Unknown" of his own time to that of the well-known "Great Unread" of ours. McMaster over-optimistically assumes that his readers

are acquainted with all the novels. Secondly, and probably related to this assumption, there is the peculiar structure of the book. It begins with a detailed account of two novels, *Waverley* and *Redgauntlet*, with the aim of showing how different these are from each other, and, further, claiming that the "journey" from one to the other "is the subject of the remainder of this book". Two problems arise here: in contrasting the two works, McMaster anticipates arguments not developed until later in the book; and he commits himself to seeing a steady progress in Scott's art from the first to the last novels. Yet when he comes to the later novels, he can no longer honestly suggest that they represent such an advance. Though he claims that Scott's "distinction as an artist is as creator of myths, romances and symbols" he can be no more than lukewarm about Scott's artistic achievement in some of the novels which most deal in myth, romance and symbol.

Finally, his critical stance is an awkward compromise between a traditional "intentionalism" and the modern search for "significant structures", regardless of probable or presumed authorial intention. There are some brave, even dogmatic assertions of his viewpoint:

My opinion about *Redgauntlet* was that as the Jacobite scenes were relatively dull and perfunctory, the novel cannot really have been about Jacobitism, whatever Scott's

intention. The test was really a critical intuition: where the novel seemed to be most alive, it was there that the meaning had to be and nowhere else.

Whenever metaphor (perhaps metonymy as the principal mode) of the novel, this is the place to try to find its real significance.

In practice, however, he moves uneasily between respectfully taking into account what he assumes to be Scott's intentions and finding the novels "significant" without regard to these presumed intentions. Thus in dealing with *Anne of Geierstein* he writes:

Scott's writing habits are responsible for making *Anne* look more like a novel really concerned with the politics of the past than it is. As in *Woodstock* and *Peveril*, he is unable to keep out certain preoccupations that are at best secondary.

Presumably Scott's "preoccupations" were – for Scott at least – of primary rather than secondary importance.

This cannot have been an easy book to write. Scott presents insuperable difficulties to the critic, particularly the critic who hopes, as McMaster does, to make a case for artistic progress in Scott's career. Nevertheless, there is much to interest and enlighten the reader here, particularly in the chapters dealing with Scottish Enlightenment social thought and local history.

economic and social context of the poorer country, and in both cases the London government had to bid down.

James Anderson's book is also Scott and history, both what Scott wrote and what he wrote. The main part of the book is on the specific historical sources on which Scott drew in writing his novels. These chapters have already appeared in print, in a series of articles in *Studies in Scottish Literature* in 1966–68. They are strong on the Jacobite sources and, especially, those for the Covenanting period which Scott used in *Old Mortality* and *The Heart of Midlothian*. This work will be useful to anyone interested in Scott's source material; but it must be borne in mind that it traces only written historical sources, and that many of the most important sources are not have important sources are not

When it comes to the writing of history Anderson points out that Scott contributed both as an editor and as a narrative historian. His most famous work is the thirteen-volume *Scott's Tales of the Borders and of Scotland*, a series of papers, memoirs and pamphlets, became accessible through his editorial work. Scott was no textual scholar (see, for example, in Anderson's view, his highest standards of his age), but, like Dr Johnson, he excelled as a popular and commentator. Among Scott's historical writing Anderson finds particular admiration for *Tales of the Grandfather*, "perhaps the most successful history book ever written", and the source of all that is usually remembered about Scottish history. What other work, he asks, could have inspired the *Boy's Own Paper* in the 1920s to produce a cartoon strip on the Regent Moray?

Dr Anderson does not write of history in any large philosophical sense. He means by history the past, and those writings which best preserve it. If they are full of illuminating facts and anecdotes, to which the reader is aware of fighting a rearranged deck of chairs, he is happy. He is happy in the fact that the *Boy's Own Paper* was a success. He is happy in the fact that the *Boy's Own Paper* was a success. He is happy in the fact that the *Boy's Own Paper* was a success.

He starts with a pleasant survey of what Walter Scott owed to his birth and upbringing in Scotland. He examines Scott's Border inheritance, the Roman *severitas* of his education at the High School in Edinburgh (a school which the author, too, attended) and the influence of Enlightenment thinkers at the Edinburgh University. The climax of the book is a chapter which considers Scott's attitude to the Union of the parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707. This last has been a contentious issue in recent years. References to the Union, and to the national status of Scotland after it, occur throughout Scott's work, fiction and non-fiction, public and intimate, early and late. These have given rise to differing verdicts; that Scott approved

# Giving 'Paradise Lost' to the peasants

Henry Gifford

M. P. ALEKSEYEV, V. V. ZAKHAROV, B. B. TOMASHEVSKY (Editors)

Angliyskaya poeziya v russkikh perevodakh XIV–XIX veka. English Verse in Russian Translation: 14th–19th Centuries  
686pp. Moscow: Progress Publishers. 3 rubles.

This rather handsome anthology contains 144 poems, the English (or Scottish) text facing a Russian verse translation. There are also a few alternative versions in the notes. The translators include distinguished poets – Pushkin for example, whose adoption of "The Two Corbises" is as fine as the original. Lermontov (from Byron), Tsvetayeva (a ballad of Robin Hood), Pasternak. Others must be reckoned specialists in the craft, like the omniscient Mar-shak, represented here by versions of a Scottish ballad, seven sonnets of Shakespeare and two of Milton, and poems by Waller, Blake, Burns, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning and Stevenson. Many of the translations are modern, but for the earlier poets there are some durable versions from the past. Included is one of the most famous ever made in Russia – Gray's *Elegy* in the 1802 rendering by Zhukovsky, fluent but not exact enough for his taste many years later when he turned the poem into hexameters. He also contributes a translation of Dryden's exuberant ode, "Alexander's Feast", its brio a little diminished. Batyushkov, like Zhukovsky an older contemporary and erstwhile master of Pushkin, touches with his own grace the lines from *Childe Harold*. There is a pleasure in the pathless woods.

The late M. P. Alekseyev (regrettably all three editors who had prepared this anthology are no longer alive) wrote for it a highly informative Afterword of more than seventy pages in which he chronicles the slow advance of English poetry in eighteenth-century Russia. Until the 1760s there had been little or no direct recourse by translators to English poetry in the original. Russian readers were enthusiastic about Shakespeare and more recent poets like Gay of the *Fables*, Young (whose *Night Thoughts* had an immense vogue) and Gray. But all these made their appeal by way of French, or later German, prose paraphrase. When translation proper began in the 1790s and 1800s with Karamzin, Gnedich and above all Zhukovsky, it was still the Augustans and pre-Romantics who filled the picture. Then came Scott, Byron (heavily represented in this anthology), and even the less exportable Wordsworth. "We are the Seven" of 1833 is a straight-faced version of about the same quality as the original.

There was another burst of translating, a hundred years after the first, when the Symbolists appeared. Balmont brought Shelley on the scene, and Bryusov introduced poetry from many literatures ancient and modern. His example did much to shape the procedure of twentieth-century translators in Russia, as Pound has with us, though not in the same way: Bryusov's bent was all towards the conservation of form and the simplifying of sense. In the Soviet era almost the entire range of English poetry has been opened up. Even the metaphysicals are on the horizon. This anthology includes three of Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* (two in apt versions by one of its editors, Boris Tomashevsky, the eminent Pushkin scholar), and George Herbert's "Vermilion" agreeably phrased by I. A. Likhachov. The reader must not flinch from two versions of the "Jabberwocky" (a starting precursor of Russian "travesty" writing in the Futurist heyday). Likhachov boldly attempts "The Leaden Echo" by Hopkins, which is less muffled in translation than one might have expected.

The Russian reader will be fortified by this volume in his appreciation of English verse. Everywhere he

will find honest, often accomplished, work, and sometimes a poem which seems equal in power to its original. Two of these are by Pasternak: Keats's ode "To Autumn" (even though it starts with the line, "Season of fruitfulness and rains"), and "Sir Walter Raleigh to his Sonnet" – how beautifully he renders the "three things" that cannot meet without mischief, "the wood, the weede, the wagg", by *rashcha, porosi, podrostok*. The words are appropriate, and it is not only alliteration and assonance that bind them but their common derivation from a stem meaning "grow".

Not all the successes have fallen to major poets. Likhachov deals felicitously with two other odes by Keats: he achieves a severe perfection in the last stanza of "Melancholy". There is great pleasure in nothing how Yu. D. Levin has caught the very tone and rhythm of Crabbe in "Peter Grimes" – a reading that shows the inwardness of imaginative scholarship.

M. L. Lozinsky's adherence to the movement and syntax of "To be or not to be" and "O! that this too too solid flesh" is unflattering. This exemplifies the Russian method at its surest, aided of course by the absence of rhyme. The method breaks down, however, even in the capable

hands of Marshak, when he tries Wordsworth's Lucy poem. "A slumber did my spirit seal". What he gives is a fair précis in matching form, but the strange interpenetration of meanings in the poem has vanished. He is recorded in the brief notes on translators as having aimed always to "clarify" the poems he handled. This is in the spirit of Bryusov, that undercover agent of rationalism among the Symbolists. Pushkin of course has his own high clarity, but there is more in his limpid verse than shows on the surface.

The anthology may be criticized in some respects. It has let in too many mediocre poems (by Southey, Campbell, Scott, Moore, and the like). They make an easy passage in translation, with the exchange rate too favourable. The selection from the nineteenth century shows a bias towards agitational work, not always very distinguished. Undenially, in their youth at least, many of our poets since Blake have written sometimes in this vein. The English reader may have overlooked the tendency, though he will not have forgotten Hood's "Song of the Shirt", for instance, vigorously present in the book. We need not grudge the appearance of Ernest Jones and W. J. Linton (Quiller-Couch found room for a poem by each in his *Oxford Book of*

*Victorian Verse*). And perhaps "The Old Chartist" by Meredith deserves its place: in the Russian the jauntness is less grating. However, it seems fairly comic that the sole exhibit from Tennyson should be the genteelly erotic "Godiva", because she "took the tax away" imposed by "that grim Earl", her husband.

More seriously, the view of English poetry over the centuries offered by these translations is to some degree out of focus. There are too many fleeting appearances by poets who matter (Jonson in one slight lyric, Marvell represented solely by "The Definition of Love", none of Dryden's satire or Pope's, though for the latter we have a glimpse of *Windsor Forest* and "The Dying Christian to his Soul"). There are striking absences: nothing from *Piers Plowman* is to be found, though there are several ballads and two excerpts from the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*; missing are Dunbar, Henry Vaughan, Samuel Johnson, Wordsworth of *The Prelude*. "The Leaden Echo" will hardly suffice for Hopkins. And it is dispiriting to see our poetry dwindle down from Swinburne (overpraised in the notes for his virtuosity) to Stevenson and Wilde, when Hardy, Kipling and Yeats were available.

Alekseyev concludes his survey by affirming the belief that poetry can speak "the universal language of truth, goodness and beauty". He is able to show how in various ways our poetry has gone deep into Russian popular consciousness. The first example comes from Maurice Baring who reported in 1910 that "*Paradise Lost* translated into simple prose [Books I–III by Petrov in 1777], is sold in cheap editions, with coloured pictures, all over Russia, and greedily read by the peasants . . . as a tale of fantastic adventure and miraculous events". Again, in Soviet times, field women in Siberia could be heard singing what was recognizable as *Opheleia's song* in the version by Pushkin's contemporary Polevoy. Finally, Byron's farewell to his country in *Childe Harold* ("Adieu, adieu! my native shore / Fades o'er the waters blue") had taken new form on the Volga as a lament for lost homeland and freedom.

Poetry still enjoys a very large audience in Russia. Any living translation has a chance of being lodged in the popular mind. This anthology contains much that is viable. The first imprint was of 125,000 copies. That should ensure a wider hearing for English poetry, with all the aids to comprehension that a scholarly book like this provides.

# Life on the Lenin Hills

Archie Brown

ANDREA LEE  
Russian Journal  
239pp. Faber. £8.95.  
0 571 11904 2

Hundreds of Western undergraduates, graduate students and young lecturers have, over the past two decades and more, lived for an academic year in one of the residential wings of the grandiose Moscow University building on the Lenin Hills. A majority of them have been graduate students pursuing research in Russia and attending a Soviet university under an exchange agreement whereby Soviet students of equivalent status come to the United States, Canada, Britain or another Western European country.

Most of these Western scholars do not write so much as an article, still less a book, specifically on their experiences of life in the Soviet Union, though every now and then they write at the wild generalizations (whether from a standpoint sympathetic to, or highly critical of, the Soviet Union) of those who have made brief tourist trips to Moscow or Leningrad and have been unable to resist the temptation to publish their accounts. The reasons why those who stay longer often write less – at least in the genre of memoirs – are numerous. Some of these Western scholars have been so bored and disgruntled that they would, in turn, bore their readers. But for others, it was rather that the longer they stayed

the more complex the society seemed to be, the more difficult it became to sort out deeply held from superficially held beliefs and to make judgments about the representativeness, significance or idiosyncrasy of different strands of opinion. And probably a still more important constraint was an unwillingness to risk abusing friendships by making public what was said in private.

If individuals who visit the Soviet Union as students or academics can satisfy themselves that these are surmountable obstacles, then they have an advantage not only over the average tourist but over the entire diplomatic corps, for the latter interact mainly with each other and receive as little encouragement from their own embassies as from the Soviet authorities to mix freely with Russians.

Not all exchange students or their spouses, however, acquire as wide a range of Russian friends and acquaintances or write so well and perceptively as Andrea Lee, a young, black American Harvard graduate who accompanied her husband – who was doing research on Russian history – to Moscow University in the late 1970s. The sample of people whom she met was not, of course, a representative one; it scarcely ever is even within one's own society. Often, Western academics who spend a lengthy period in the Soviet Union meet people of a wider diversity of views and from a wider variety of social milieux than they would in their own country – and more various also than the circle of the average Russian intellectual who, not

surprisingly, tends to choose his friends from among like-minded people.

Showing the catholicity of taste of one who wishes to understand as many different aspects as possible, of the society in which she finds herself, Andrea Lee established cordial relations with avant-garde artists, with typical Russian students, with a private businesswoman "dealing mainly in jeans" with Komsomol activists, with Soviet hippies, with Jews about to emigrate, and (more unusually) with the occasional manual worker. She and her husband were also the guests of two Soviet celebrities and pillars of the establishment, Tikhon Khrennikov and Victor Louis.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Russians she met tended overwhelmingly to be Westerners rather than Slavophiles, but it is a resultant weakness of the book that too many of those who occupy its pages are obsessed with the United States and even want to live there. The unruly reader might be led to underestimate the growing strength of Russian national feeling and to reach the mistaken conclusion that half the population of Moscow would promptly forsake Gorky Park for Central Park should the frontiers be opened.

But provided readers take account of Andrea Lee's own disclaimer – that the entries in her journal "are like a set of photographs taken by an amateur who is drawn to his subjects by instinct and capricious inclination" – the book can be read with profit and pleasure. Sometimes, though, amateurishness does show through, and there are oddities of judgment. The impression is conveyed that Siberia is populated mainly by Asians, while "ritzy" seems rather an exaggeration as a description of the "Moscow neighbourhood off Kutuzovskiy Prospekt".

The translation of many Russian words bears little relation to any transliteration scheme ever devised, and no old woman is allowed to appear in the book without the overworked Russian word *babushka* (grandmother) being used to designate her. Sometimes the book is more revealing of American than of Russian customs. Thus: "Food requires forethought in the Soviet Union: one must stand in a cafeteria line for it, or prepare it from the absolutely raw ingredients" (my italics).

Yet middle-aged and young Moscow hands alike will find much here which does accord with their own experiences. Student life-style in Moscow University in some respects at least, seems to have changed little from the 1960s to the 1970s. As one of the earlier of these two decades, I was

interested to learn that empty vodka, wine or beer bottles still hit the ground every five or ten minutes on a summer evening (from a height of anything from five to twenty-five storeys) as students dispose of them in the least time-consuming way.

If the bottle-throwing is "uncultured", Andrea Lee does not fail to draw attention to the respect in which Soviet society may reasonably be regarded as more "cultured" than the United States or, for that matter, most Western European societies. She notes that "ordinary people show a passion for art and literature which might be suspect as a pose in America". She also comments on the "strange" fact that so many natural scientists in the Soviet Union are "passionately devoted to the arts". The latter phenomenon is not really so strange. It is a compound of a cultural tradition which has been transmitted from one generation to another in spite of changes of, and within, a régime and of a response to specific features of the Soviet system. So far as the latter are concerned, the constraints upon intellectual freedom which affect those working in the arts lead people who might well prefer to work in the humanities if they were living in the United States or Western Europe to become scientists and engineers instead. In these disciplines they can exercise their intellects to the full and they do not need to engage in self-censorship in the course of their work. In their non-working time they remain free to read creative literature and to discuss it without inhibitions among their friends. The system itself makes available, and helps to instil a love for, many of the Russian classics and the very dearliness of some of the "mass culture" alternatives strengthens devotion to serious literature.

It is well known that the spectator generally sees more of the game than the players. As in the case of others who have looked at Russia through Western eyes, Andrea Lee may know much less in detail about particular aspects of Russian life than those who have been born and brought up in Russia, but – taking full advantage of one of the privileges of a foreigner with academic status in the Soviet Union – she enters a variety of milieux, some of which would be regarded as mutually incompatible by a native and it should be added, by less adventurous and more conventional foreigners. It is still far from being a full picture, but Andrea Lee's intellectual curiosity and her individuality as a writer are sufficiently notable to make this one of the more illuminating portraits of contemporary Russia to be produced by a foreigner who has a genuine love of the joys and frustrations of living there.

# Genius demoted

Imre Salusinszky

JEROME CHRISTENSEN  
Coleridge's Blessed Machine of Language  
276pp. Cornell University Press. £12.25.  
0 8014 1405 9

Coleridge, in this deconstructive and de-idealizing study of his prose, is seen less as author than as victim: the victim of an accused machine of writing that "floats on figures" and undermines his search for stabilizing origins and unities.

Jerome Christensen's aim is not "to reproduce what Coleridge thought", but to "produce the way Coleridge writes". A good example is his treatment of *Biographia*'s discussion of the "original poetic genius" of Wordsworth, where the "genius" on which Coleridge would hinge so much of his argument turns out to be neither original, nor Wordsworth's. In Chapter Four, Coleridge describes the profound effect upon him of Wordsworth's recitation of a manuscript poem. But he soon intrudes his own genius, when the description suddenly becomes a long quotation from, and advertisement for, *The Friend*. The quotation, on poetic genius, cites Burns and Milton, both of whom influenced Wordsworth. But they serve here to draw attention to "the split within Wordsworth", since they identify the poles of poetic definition between which he is torn. In Chapter Two, Coleridge's evidence for Shakespeare's genius includes the citation of Sonnet 81, "Your name from hence immortal life shall have", and, again, brings Coleridge's own

powers to the fore, because it is the *Biographia* that will immortalize Wordsworth.

Christensen does not argue that Coleridge is promoting his own claims, while consciously and subtly deprecating Wordsworth's. Rather, he holds that no genius is instanced or established in *Biographia*, and no general theory of mind can be rested upon it. The quality of genius, according to *Biographia* and *The Friend*, is its ability to awaken "that freshness of sensation which is the constant accompaniment of mental, no less than of bodily, convalescence". Christensen shows the similarity between this and the language used to describe the effects of laudanum, in Coleridge's letters. Like the anodyne, genius is a figure which "includes within its fold, as part of its pleasure, the marks of its transience".

In this important, because up-to-date, book, Christensen holds that "Reading Coleridge means questioning romanticism". A lot of space is given to questioning Coleridge's claim to have overthrown Hartleian "association", "Deconstruction may well prove to be Hurley's revenge on Coleridge, since the assemblage philosophy it does resemble the "indefinite (tropism)" (Christensen's phrase) propounded by Derrida, the main influence on this book. But Derrida is a philosopher of language, and the romantic argument (a better word here than the ubiquitous "discourse") resists a linguistic reduction, as it resists a supernatural one. Always prior to language, and forming it, is the drive, at once erotic and morbid, called Imagination. The critic who demotes it, for all his rightness, risks a failure of critical tact, and a falling out with his subject.

# . . . and as historian

Claire Lamont

PAUL HENDERSON SCOTT  
Walter Scott and Scotland  
99pp. Edinburgh: Blackwood. £5.95.  
0 85158 143 9

SLR James Scott and History  
206pp. Edinburgh: Edina Press.  
£5.75.  
0 905695 12 7

Here are two books on subjects perennially interesting to students of Scott: Scott and Scotland, and Scott and history. Both are labours of love, apparently long meditated by authors nurtured in Edinburgh. Piety to the city and its most famous literary son is, in the event, all that they have in common.

Anyone taking Paul Henderson Scott's title, *Walter Scott and Scotland*, cannot fail to be aware of his predecessor, Edwin Muir, whose *Scott and Scotland* came out in 1936. Muir's book was a response to an invitation to write on Scott and Scotland; but in doing so he was deflected to the subject indicated by his subtitle: "The Predicament of the Scottish Writer". It was here that Muir made his famous diagnosis that "Scottism feel in one language and think in another", with the dangerous consequence that "when emotion becomes irresponsible and thought is arbitrary". This diagnosis has had an important place in the examination of Scottish writers ever since; but it has not been agreed how far it illuminates the case of Walter Scott. Paul Scott aims to take up this argument, and also to consider the nominal subject of Muir's book.

He starts with a pleasant survey of what Walter Scott owed to his birth and upbringing in Scotland. He examines Scott's Border inheritance, the Roman *severitas* of his education at the High School in Edinburgh (a school which the author, too, attended) and the influence of Enlightenment thinkers at the Edinburgh University. The climax of the book is a chapter which considers Scott's attitude to the Union of the parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707. This last has been a contentious issue in recent years. References to the Union, and to the national status of Scotland after it, occur throughout Scott's work, fiction and non-fiction, public and intimate, early and late. These have given rise to differing verdicts; that Scott approved

of the Union and devoted his writing to cementing it; that he disapproved of it and acquiesced only through unwillingness to see war break out again across the Border; that he regarded it as an unalterable fact and sought in his writing to check the consequent erosion of the Scottish identity. Paul Scott's views lean towards the last two of these.

Until recently the "Scott and Scotland" debate was usually conducted through a study of the novels. A favourite text was the ending of *Redgauntlet*. When Hugh Redgauntlet, finding himself the victim of Hanoverian magnanimity, exclaims "the cause is lost for ever!" the question was raised whether he referred to a loss more far-reaching than the defeat of the Jacobites. Such an investigation has been made by Edwin Muir, David Daiches and by Janet Adam Smith in two fine lectures on "Scott and the Idea of Scotland" (*University of Edinburgh Journal*, 1964). Later, however, the debate has shifted from the novels to Scott's only political work, the *Letters from Malachi Malagrowther on the proposed change of currency*. With the change of text there has been loss of critical acumen. It is a merit of Paul Scott's book that it points out how the *Malagrowther Letters* have been subject to hasty summary and misreading. But there is more to be said. The *Malagrowther Letters* are Scott's angriest work, more angry than can be accounted for by his grumpy persona Malachi Malagrowther. It has become common to regard the *Letters* as a case of impotence letting off steam. But surely Scott's anger was more effective than that. The *Malagrowther Letters* were precipitated by the government's intention in 1826 to deprive Scottish banks of the right to produce low-denomination paper money, a form of currency which was much needed in a country where coin was scarce and small credit in demand. Scott regarded this as a high-handed move which infringed the Treaty of Union. But he did not only argue from the past; he also warned that without the facility of credit many small enterprises would collapse, driving the poor out of Scotland to North America and Australia. In taking a stand on this issue Scott had before him the example of Swift, whose works he had edited. Swift's most immediately effective writing on behalf of Ireland, *The Drapier's Letters*, were written to protect the Irish currency against the introduction of Wood's Halfpence. Malagrowther, like the Drapier before him, set forth the currency issue in the

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